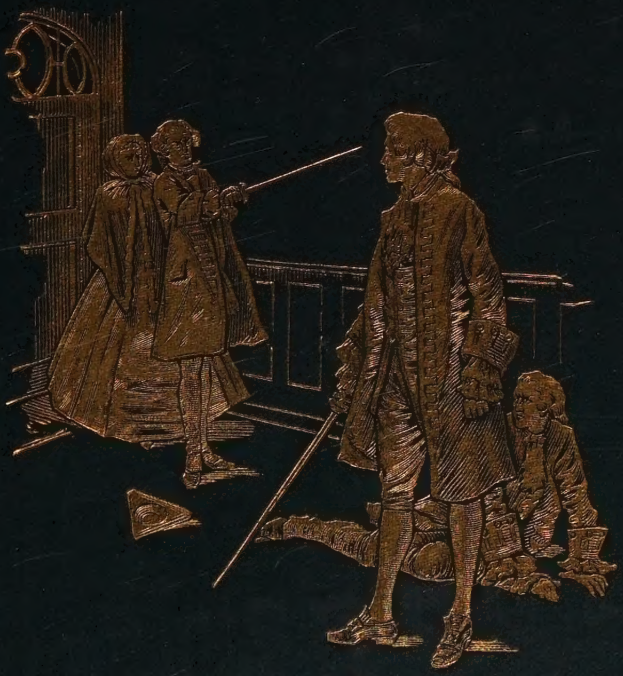
Sir Charles Grandison

by Richardson

Edited by

George Saintsbury



With Illustrations by

Chris. Hammond

LETTERS FROM

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON

VOL. II

GEORGE ALLEN
PUBLISHER
LONDON
156 CHARING CROSS ROAD
RUSKIN HOUSE

LETTERS FROM SIR CHARLES GRANDISON

SELECTED

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

AND CONNECTING NOTES

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

CHRIS. HAMMOND

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON

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LETTERS FROM

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON

LETTERS VIII.–XVIII. (Vol. iv.) *contain a great deal of miscellaneous matter preparatory to the departure of Sir Charles for Italy, including the probable reformation of Mrs. O'Hara, the consent (very freakishly given) of Charlotte Grandison to marry Lord G. before her brother goes, and the execution of this arrangement after much skittishness on the lady's part. Sir Charles "briefly lays before his sister the duties of a married life:" an unconscious but irresistible revolt from which may be noticed on her part in the sequel.*

LETTER XIX [iv]

LADY G. TO MISS BYRON

Thursday, April 13.

FOR Heaven's sake, my dearest Harriet, dine with us to-day for two reasons: one relates to myself, the other you shall hear by-and-by. To myself first, as is most fit. This silly creature has offended me, and presumed to be sullen upon my resentment. Married but two days and show his airs! Were I in fault, my dear (which, upon my honour, I am not),

for the man to lose his patience with me, to forget his obligations to me, in two days! What an ungrateful wretch is he! What a poor, powerless creature your Charlotte!

Nobody knows of the matter, except he has complained to my brother. If he has! But what if he has! Alas! my dear, I am married, and cannot help myself.

We seem, however, to be drawing up our forces on both sides. One struggle for my dying liberty, my dear! The success of one pitched battle will determine which is to be the general, which the subaltern, for the rest of the campaign. To dare to be sullen already! As I hope to live, my dear, I was in high good humour within myself; and when he was foolish, only intended a little play with him; and he takes it in earnest. He worships you; so I shall railly him before you; but I charge you, as the man by his sullenness has taken upon him to fight his own battle, either to be on my side or be silent. I shall take it very ill of my Harriet if she strengthen his hands.

Well, but enough of this husband—husband! What a word! Who do you think is arrived from abroad? You cannot guess for your life—Lady Olivia! True as you are alive!—accompanied, it seems, by an aunt of hers, a widow, whose years and character are to keep the niece in countenance in this excursion. The pretence is making the tour of Europe, and England was not to be left out of the scheme. My brother is excessively disturbed at her arrival. She came to town but last night. He had notice of it but this morning. He took Emily with him to visit her. Emily was known to her at Florence. She and her aunt are to be here at dinner. As she is come, Sir Charles says, he must bring her acquainted with his sisters and their lords, in order to be at liberty to pursue the measures he has unalterably resolved upon; and this, Harriet, is my second reason for urging you to dine with us.

Now do I wish we had known her history at large. Dr.

I was in high good humour within myself.

Chris Hammond
Aug '95

Bartlett shall tell it us. Unwelcome as she is to my brother, I long to see her. I hope I shall not hear something in her story that will make me pity her.

Will you come?

I wonder whether she speaks English or not. I don't think I can converse in Italian.

I won't forgive you if you refuse to come.

Lady L. and her good man will be here. We shall therefore, if you come, be our whole family together.

My brother has presented this house to me till his return. He calls himself Lord G.'s guest and mine, so you can have no punctilio about it; besides, Lord W. will set out to-morrow morning for Windsor. He dotes upon you, and perhaps it is in your power to make a new-married man penitent and polite.

So you must come.

Hang me if I sign by any other name, while this man is in his fits, than that of

CHARLOTTE GRANDISON.

LETTER XX [iv]

MISS BYRON TO MISS SELBY

Thursday, April 13.

I SEND you enclosed a letter I received this morning from Lady G. I will suppose you have read it.

Emily says that the meeting between Sir Charles and the lady mentioned in it was very polite on both sides, but more cold on his than on hers. She made some difficulty, however, of dining at his house, and her aunt, Lady Maffei, more; but on Sir Charles's telling them that he would bring his elder sister to attend them thither, they complied.

When I went to St. James's Square, Sir Charles and Lady L. were gone in his coach to bring the two ladies.

Lady G. met me on the stairs-head leading into her dressing-room. "Not a word," said she, "of the man's sullens. He repents: a fine figure, as I told him, of a bridegroom would he make in the eyes of foreign ladies at dinner, were he to retain his gloomy airs. He has begged my pardon, as good as promised amendment, and I have forgiven him."

"Poor Lord G.," said I.

"Hush, hush! He is within; he will hear you, and then perhaps repent of his repentance."

She led me in; my lord had a glow in his cheeks, and looked as if he had been nettled, and was but just recovering a smile to help to carry off the petulance. Oh, how saucily did her eyes look! "Well, my lord," said she, "I hope—but you say, I understood——"

"No more, madam, no more, I beseech you."

"Well, sir, not a word more, since you are——"

"Pray, madam——"

"Well, well, give me your hand. You must leave Harriet and me together."

She humorously courtesied to him as he bowed to me, taking the compliment as to herself. She nodded her head to him as he turned back his when he was at the door; and when he was gone, "If I can but make this man orderly," said she, "I shall not quarrel with my brother for hurrying me as he has done."

"You are wrong, excessively wrong, Charlotte; you call my lord a silly man, but can have no proof that he is so but by his bearing this treatment from you."

"None of your grave airs, my dear. The man is a good sort of man, and will be so, if you and Lady L. don't spoil him. I have a vast deal of roguery, but no ill-nature, in my heart There is luxury in jesting with a solemn man who wants to assume airs of privilege, and thinks he has a

right to be impertinent. I'll tell you how I will manage—I believe I shall often try his patience, and when I am conscious that I have gone too far I will be patient if he is angry with me; so we shall be quits. Then I'll begin again; he will resent; and if I find his aspect very solemn—'Come, come, no glouting, friend,' I will say, and perhaps smile in his face. 'I'll play you a tune or sing you a song—which, which? Speak in a moment, or the humour will be off.'"

If he was ready to cry before, he will laugh then, though against his will; and as he admires my finger and my voice, shall we not be instantly friends?

It signified nothing to rave at her; she will have her way. Poor Lord G.! At my first knowledge of her I thought her very lively, but imagined not that she was indiscreetly so.

Lord G.'s fondness for his saucy bride was, as I have reason to believe, his fault. I dared not to ask for particulars of their quarrel, and if I had, and found it so, could not, with such a raillying creature, have entered into his defence or censured her.

I went down a few moments before her. Lord G. whispered me that he should be the happiest man in the world if I, who had such an influence over her, would stand his friend.

"I hope, my lord," said I, "that you will not want any influence but your own. She has a thousand good qualities. She has charming spirits. You will have nothing to bear with but from them. They will not last always. Think only that she can mean nothing by the exertion of them but innocent gaiety, and she will every day love your lordship the better for bearing with her. You know she is generous and noble."

"I see, madam," said he, "she has let you into——"

"She has not acquainted me with the particulars of the little misunderstanding, only has said that there had been a slight one which was quite made up."

"I am ashamed," replied he, "to have it thought by Miss Byron that there could have been a misunderstanding

Snatching at her withdrawn hand.

between us, especially so early. She knows her power over me. I am afraid she despises me."

"Impossible, my lord. Have you not observed that she spares nobody when she is in a lively humour?"

"True. But here she comes! Not a word, madam!" I bowed, assenting silence.

"Lord G.," said she, approaching him, in a low voice, "I shall be jealous of your conversations with Miss Byron."

"Would to Heaven, my dearest life," snatching at her withdrawn hand, "that——"

"I were half as good as Miss Byron. I understand you. But time and patience, sir," nodding to him and passing him.

"Admirable creature," said he; "how I adore her."

I hinted to her afterwards his fear of her despising him. "Harriet," answered she, with a serious air, "I will do my duty by him. I will abhor my own heart if I ever find in it the shadow of a regard for any man in the world inconsistent with that which he has a right to expect from me."

I was pleased with her, and found an opportunity to communicate what she said, in confidence, to my lord, and had his blessings for it.

But now for some account of Lady Olivia, with which I will begin a new letter.

LETTER XXI [iv]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

SIR CHARLES returned with the ladies. He presented to Lady Olivia and her aunt, Lady G., Lord L., and Lord W. I was in another apartment, talking with Dr. Bartlett.

Lady Olivia asked for the doctor. He left me to pay his respects to her.

Sir Charles, being informed that I was in the house, told

Lady Olivia that he hoped he should have the honour of presenting to her one of our English beauties, desiring Lady G. to request my company.

Lady G. came to me. "A lovely woman, I assure you, Harriet. Let me lead you to her."

Sir Charles met me at the entrance of the drawing-room. "Excuse me, madam," said he, taking my hand with profound respect, "and allow me to introduce you to a very amiable Italian lady—Miss Byron, madam," addressing himself to her, "salutes you. The advantages of person are her least perfection."

Her face glowed. "Miss Byron! A relation, sir?"—in Italian.

He bowed, but answered not her question.

"I would sooner forgive you here," whispered Lady Olivia to Sir Charles, in Italian, looking at me, "than at Bologna."

I heard her, and by my confusion showed that I understood her. She was in confusion too.

"Mademoiselle," said she, in French, "understands Italian. I am ashamed, Monsieur."

"Miss Byron does," answered Sir Charles, "and French too."

"I must have the honour," said she in French, "to be better known to you, Mademoiselle."

I answered her as politely as I could in the same language.

Lady Olivia is really a lovely woman. Her complexion is fine, her face oval; every feature of it is delicate. Her hair is black, and, I think, I never saw brighter black eyes in my life: if possible they are brighter, and shine with a more piercing lustre than even Sir Charles Grandison's. But yet I give his the preference, for we see in them a benignity that hers, though a woman's, has not; and a thoughtfulness, as if something lay upon his mind, which nothing but patience could overcome, yet mingled with an air that shows him to be equal to anything that can be undertaken by man, while

Olivia's eyes show more fire and impetuosity than sweetness. Had I not been told it, I should have been sure that she has a violent spirit; but on the whole she is a very fine figure of a woman.

She talked of taking a house and staying in England a year at least, and was determined, she said, to perfect herself in the language, and to become an Englishwoman; but when Sir Charles, in the way of discourse, mentioned his obligation to leave England, as on next Saturday morning, how did she and her aunt look upon each other, and how was the sunshine that gilded her fine countenance—shut in! "Surely, sir," said her aunt, "you are not in earnest?"

After dinner the two ladies retired with Sir Charles at his motion. Dr. Bartlett, at Lady G.'s request, then gave us this short sketch of her history. He said she had a vast fortune; she had had indiscretions, but none that had affected her character as to virtue; but her spirits could not bear control. She had shown herself to be vindictive, even to a criminal degree. Lord bless me! my dear, the doctor has mentioned to me in confidence that she always carries a poniard about her, and that once she used it. Had the person died she would have been called to public account for it. The man, it seems, was of rank, and offered some slight affront to her. She now comes over, the doctor said, as he had reason to believe, with a resolution to sacrifice even her religion, if it were insisted upon, to the passion she had so long in vain endeavoured to conquer.

She has, he says, an utter hatred to Lady Clementina, and will not be able to govern her passion, he is sure, when Sir Charles shall acquaint her that he is going to attend that lady and her family; for he has only mentioned his obligation to go abroad, but not said whither.

Lord W. praised the person of the lady and her majestic air. Lord L. and Lord G. wished to be within hearing of the conference between her and Sir Charles; so did Lady G.; and

while they were thus wishing, in came Sir Charles, his face all in a glow. "Lady L.," said he, "be so good as to attend Lady Olivia."

She went to her. Sir Charles stayed not with us, yet went not to the lady, but into his study. Dr. Bartlett attended him there. The doctor returned soon after to us. "His noble heart is vexed," said he: "Lady Olivia has greatly disturbed him. He chooses to be alone."

Lady L. afterwards told us that she found the lady in violent anguish of spirit, her aunt endeavouring to calm her. She, however, politely addressed herself to Lady L., and begging her aunt to withdraw for a few moments, she owned to her, in French, her passion for her brother. She was not, she said, ashamed to own it to his sister, who must know that his merit would dignify the passion of the noblest woman. She had endeavoured to conquer hers; she had been willing to give way to the prior attachments that he had pleaded for a lady of her own country, Signora Clementina della Porretta, whom she allowed to have had great merit, but who, having irrecoverably been put out of her right mind, was shut up at Naples by a brother, who vowed eternal enmity to Sir Charles, and from whom his life would be in the utmost hazard if he went over. She owned that her chief motive for coming to England was to cast her fortune at her brother's feet, and, as she knew him to be a man of honour, to comply with any terms he should propose to her. He had offered to the family Della Porretta to allow their daughter her religion and her confessor, and to live with her every other year in Italy. She herself, not inferior in birth, in person, in mind, as she said, she presumed, and superior in fortune—the riches of three branches of her family, all rich, having centred in her—insisted not now upon such conditions. Her aunt, she said, knew not that she proposed, on conviction, a change of her religion; but she was resolved not to conceal anything from Lady L. She left her to judge how much she must be affected when he declared

his obligation to leave England, and especially when he owned that it was to go to Bologna, and that so suddenly as if, as she apprehended at first, it was to avoid her. She had been in tears, and even would have kneeled to him to induce him to suspend his journey for one month, and then to have taken her over with him, and seen her safe in her own palace, if he would go upon so hated, and so fruitless, as well as so hazardous an errand; but he had denied her this poor favour.

This refusal, she owned, had put her out of all patience. She was unhappily passionate, but was the most placable of her sex. "What, madam," said she, "can affect a woman, if slight, indignity, and repulse from a favoured person is not able to do it? A woman of my condition to come over to England to solicit—how can I support the thought!—and to be refused the protection of the man she prefers to all men, and her request to see her safe back again, though but as the fool she came over. You may blame me, madam, but you must pity me, even were you to have a heart the sister-heart of your inflexible brother."

In vain did Lady L. plead to her Lady Clementina's deplorable situation, the reluctance of his own relations to part with him, and the magnanimity of his self-denial in a hundred instances, on the bare possibility of being an instrument to restore her: she could not bear to hear her speak highly of the unhappy lady. She charged Clementina with the pride of her family, to which she attributed their deserved calamity—(Deserved! Cruel lady! How could her pitiless heart allow her lips to utter such a word!)—and imputed meanness to the noblest of human minds for yielding to the entreaties of a family, some of the principals of which, she said, had treated him with an arrogance that a man of his spirit ought not to bear.

Lady Maffei came in. She seems dependent upon her niece. She is her aunt by marriage only, and Lady L. speaks

very favourably of her from the advice she gave, and her remonstrances to her niece. Lady Maffei besought her to compose herself and return to the company.

She could not bear, she said, to return to the company, the slighted, the contemned object she must appear to be to every one in it. "I am an intruder," said she haughtily, "a beggar with a fortune that would purchase a sovereignty in some countries. Make my excuses to your sister, to the rest of the company, and to that fine young lady, whose eyes, by their officious withdrawing from his, and by the consciousness that glowed in her face whenever he addressed her, betrayed, at least to a jealous eye, more than she would wish to have seen. But tell her that, all lovely and blooming as she is, she must have no hope while Clementina lives."

I hope, Lucy, it is only to a jealous eye that my heart is so discoverable. I thank her for her caution. But I can say what she cannot—that from my heart, cost me what it may, I do subscribe to a preference in favour of a lady who has acted in the most arduous trials in a greater manner than I fear either Olivia or I could have acted in the same circumstances. We see that her reason, but not her piety, deserted her in the noble struggle between her love and her religion. In the most affecting absences of her reason, the soul of the man she loved was the object of her passion. However hard it is to prefer another to one's self in such a case as this, yet if my judgment is convinced, my acknowledgment shall follow it. Heaven will enable me to be reconciled to the event, because I pursue the dictates of that judgment against the biasses of my more partial heart. Let that Heaven, which only can, restore Clementina, and dispose as it pleases of Olivia and Harriet. We cannot either of us, I humbly hope, be so unhappy as the lady has been whom I rank among the first of women, and whose whole family deserves almost equal compassion.

Lady Olivia asked Lady L. if her brother had not a very

"I am an intruder," said she haughtily.

tender regard for me. "He had," Lady L. answered, and

told her that he had rescued me from a very great distress, and that mine was the most grateful of human hearts.

She called me "sweet young creature" (supposing me, I doubt not, younger than I am), but said that the graces of my person and mind alarmed her not, as they would have done had not his attachment to Clementina been what now she saw but never could have believed it was, having supposed that compassion only was the tie that bound him to her.

But compassion, Lucy, from such a heart as his, the merit so great in the lady, must be love, a love of the nobler kind; and if it were not, it would be unworthy of Clementina's.

Lady Maffei called upon her dignity, her birth, to carry her above a passion that met not with a grateful return. She advised her to dispose herself to stay in England some months, now she was here; and as her friends in Italy would suppose what her view was in coming to England, their censures would be obviated by her continuing here for some time, while Sir Charles was abroad and in Italy, and that she should divert herself with visiting the court, the public places, and in seeing the principal curiosities of this kingdom, as she had done those of others, in order to give credit to an excursion that might otherwise be freely spoken of in her own country.

She seemed to listen to this advice. She bespoke and was promised the friendship of the two sisters, and included in her request, through their interests, mine; and Lady G. was called in by her sister to join in the promise.

She desired that Sir Charles might be requested to walk in, but would not suffer the sisters to withdraw, as they would have done, when he returned. He could not but be polite, but, it seems, looked still disturbed. "I beg you to excuse, sir," said she, "my behaviour to you: it was passionate, it was unbecoming. But, in compliment to your own consequence, you ought to excuse it. I have only to request one favour of you, that you will suspend for one week, in regard to me, your proposed journey—but for one week, and I will,

now I am in England, stay some months, perhaps till your return."

"Excuse me, madam."

"I will not excuse you. But one week, sir. Give me so much importance with myself, as for one week's suspension. You will. You must."

"Indeed, I cannot. My soul, I own to you, is in the distresses of the family of Porretta. Why should I repeat what I said to you before?"

"I have bespoken, sir, the civilities of your sisters, of your family: you forbid them not?"

"You expect not an answer, madam, to that question. My sisters will be glad, and so will their lords, to attend you, wherever you please, with a hope to make England agreeable to you."

"How long do you propose to stay in Italy, sir?"

"It is not possible for me to determine."

"Are you not apprehensive of danger to your person?"

"I am not."

"You ought to be."

"No danger shall deter me from doing what I think to be right. If my motives justify me, I cannot fear."

"Do you wish me, sir, to stay in England till your return?"

A question so home put disturbed him. Was it a prudent one in the lady? It must either subject her to a repulse, or him, by a polite answer, to give her hope that her stay in England might not be fruitless as to the view she had in coming. He reddened. "It is fit," answered he, "that your own pleasure should determine you. It did, pardon me, madam, in your journey hither."

She reddened to her very ears. "Your brother, ladies, has the reputation of being a polite man: bear witness to this instance of it. I am ashamed of myself."

"If I am unpolite, madam, my sincerity will be my excuse —at least to my own heart."

"Oh that inflexible heart! But, ladies, if the inhospitable Englishman refuse his protection, in his own country, to a foreign woman of no mean quality, do not you, his sisters, despise her."

"They, madam, and their lords will render you every cheerful service. Let me request you, my sisters, to make England as agreeable as possible to this lady. She is of the first consideration in her own country: she will be of such wherever she goes. My Lady Maffei deserves likewise your utmost respect." Then, addressing himself to them, "Ladies," said he, "encourage my sisters: they will think themselves honoured by your commands."

The two sisters confirmed in an obliging manner what their brother had said, and both ladies acknowledged themselves indebted to them for their offered friendship; but Lady Olivia seemed not at all satisfied with their brother, and it was with some difficulty he prevailed on her to return to the company and drink coffee.

I could not help reflecting, on occasion of this lady's conduct, that fathers and mothers are great blessings, to daughters in particular, even when women grown. It is not every woman that will shine in a state of independency. Great fortunes are snares. If independent women escape the machinations of men, which they have often a difficulty to do, they will frequently be hurried by their own imaginations, which are said to be livelier than those of men, though their judgments are supposed less, into inconveniences. Had Lady Olivia's parents or uncles lived, she hardly would have been permitted to make the tour of Europe; and not having so great a fortune to support vagaries, would have shone, as she is well qualified to do, in a dependent state, in Italy, and made some worthy man and herself happy.

Had she a mind great enough to induce her to pity Clementina, I should have been apt to pity her, for I saw her soul was disturbed. I saw that the man she loved was not

able to return her love: a pitiable case! I saw a starting tear now and then with difficulty dispersed. Once she rubbed her eye, and, being conscious of observation, said something had got into it. So it had. The something was a tear. Yet she looked with haughtiness, and her bosom swelled with indignation ill concealed.

Sir Charles repeated his recommendation of her to Lord L. and Lord G. They offered their best services. Lord W. invited her and all of us to Windsor. Different parties of pleasure were talked of, but still the enlivener of every party was not to be in any one of them. She tried to look pleased, but did not always succeed in the trial: an eye of love and anger mingled was often cast upon the man whom everybody loved. Her bosom heaved, as it seemed sometimes, with indignation against herself: that was the construction which I made of some of her looks.

Lady Maffei, however, seemed pleased with the parties of pleasure talked of. She often directed herself to me in Italian; I answered her in it as well as I could. I do not talk it well; but as I am not an Italian, and little more than book-learned in it (for it is a long time ago since I lost my grandfather, who used to converse with me in it and in French), I was not scrupulous to answer in it. To have forborne because I did not excel in what I had no opportunity to excel in would have been false modesty, nearly bordering upon pride. Were any lady to laugh at me for not speaking well her native tongue, I would not return the smile were she to be less perfect in mine than I am in hers. But Lady Olivia made me a compliment on my faulty accent when I acknowledged it to be so. "Signora," said she, "you show us that a pretty mouth can give beauty to a defect. A master teaching you," added she, "would perhaps find some fault, but a friend conversing with you must be in love with you for the very imperfection."

Sir Charles was generously pleased with the compliment, and made her a fine one on her observation.

He attended the two ladies to their lodgings in his coach. He owned to Dr. Bartlett that Lady Olivia was in tears all the way, lamenting her disgrace in coming to England just as he was quitting it, and wishing she had stayed at Florence. She would have engaged him to correspond with her; he excused himself. It was a very afflicting thing to him, he told the doctor, to deny any request that was made to him, especially by a lady; but he thought he ought in conscience and honour to forbear giving the shadow of an expectation that might be improved into hope where none was intended to be given. Heaven, he said, had, for laudable ends, implanted such a regard in the sexes towards each other that both man and woman who hoped to be innocent could not be too circumspect in relation to the friendships they were so ready to contract with each other. He thought he had gone a great way in recommending an intimacy between her and his sisters, considering her views, her spirit, her perseverance, and the free avowal of her regard for him, and her menaces on his supposed neglect of her. And yet, as she had come over, and he was obliged to leave England so soon after her arrival, he thought he could not do less; and he hoped his sisters, from whose example she might be benefited, would, while she behaved prudently, cultivate her acquaintance.

The doctor tells me that now Lady Olivia is so unexpectedly come hither in person, he thinks it best to decline giving me, as he had once intended, her history at large, but will leave so much of it as may satisfy my curiosity to be gathered from my own observation, and not only from the violence and haughtiness of her temper, but from the freedom of her declarations. He is sure, he said, that his patron will be best pleased that a veil should be thrown over the weaker part of her conduct, which, were it known, would indeed be glorious to Sir Charles, but not so to the lady; who, however, never was suspected, even by her enemies, of giving any other man reason to tax her with a thought that was not strictly

virtuous; and she had engaged his pity and esteem, for the sake of her other fine qualities, though she could not his love. Before she saw him (which, it seems, was at the opera at Florence for the first time, when he had an opportunity to pay her some slight civilities) she set all men at defiance.

To-morrow morning Sir Charles is to breakfast with me. My cousins and I are to dine at Lord L.'s. The earl and Lady Gertrude are also to be there. Lord W. has been prevailed upon to stay and be there also, as it is his nephew's last day in England. "Last day in England!" Oh, my Lucy, what words are those! Lady L. has invited Lady Olivia and her aunt at her own motion, Sir Charles (his time being so short) not disapproving.

I thank my grandmamma and aunt for their kind summons. I will soon set my day: I will, my dear, soon set my day.

In LETTERS XXII., XXIII. (Vol. iv.), *Lady Olivia is introduced to Harriet. Sir Charles, after expressing not unnatural anxiety as to the future of the G. marriage, departs without taking formal leave. Miss Byron is much agitated.*

LETTER XXIV [iv]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Sunaay, April 16.

OH, what a blank, my dear! But I need not say what I was going to say. Poor Emily! But to mention her grief is to paint my own.

Lord W. went to Windsor yesterday.

A very odd behaviour of Lady Olivia. Mr. Beauchamp went yesterday. and offered to attend her to any of the public places at her pleasure, in pursuance of Sir Charles's reference

to him to do all in his power to make England agreeable to her; and she thought fit to tell him before her aunt that she thanked him for his civility, but she should not trouble him during her stay in England. She had gentlemen in her train, and one of them had been in England before.

He left her in disgust.

Lady L. making her a visit in the evening, she told her of Mr. Beauchamp's offer and of her answer. "The gentleman," said she, "is a polite and very agreeable man; and this made me treat his kind offer with abruptness, for I can hardly doubt your brother's view in it. I scorn his view; and if I were sure of it, perhaps I should find a way to make him repent of the indignity." Lady L. was sure, she said, that neither her brother nor Mr. Beauchamp had any other views than to make England as agreeable to her as possible.

"Be this as it may, madam," said she, "I have no service for Mr. Beauchamp; but if your ladyship, your sister, and your two lords will allow me to cultivate your friendship, you will do me honour. Dr. Bartlett's company will be very agreeable to me likewise, as often as he will give it me. To Miss Jervois I lay some little claim. I would have had her for my companion in Italy, but your cruel brother—no more, however, of him. Your English beauty too, I admire her; but, poor young creature, I admire her the more because I can pity her. I should think myself very happy to be better acquainted with her."

Lady L. made her a very polite answer for herself and her sister and their lords, but told her that I was very soon to set out for my own abode in Northamptonshire, and that Dr. Bartlett had some commissions which would oblige him, in a day or two, to go to Sir Charles's seat in the country. She herself offered to attend her to Windsor, and to every other place, at her command.

. . . . . .

Lady L. took notice of her wrist being bound round with

a broad black riband, and asked if it were hurt. "A kind of sprain," said she. "But you little imagine how it came, and must not ask."

This made Lady L. curious; and Olivia requesting that Emily might be allowed to breakfast with her as this morning, she has bid the dear girl endeavour to know how it came if it fell in her way; for Olivia reddened, and looked up with a kind of consciousness to Lady L. when she told her that she must not ask questions about it.

Lady G. is very earnest with me to give into the town diversions for a month to come, but I have now no desire in my heart so strong as to return to all my dear Northamptonshire friends.

I am only afraid of my uncle. He will railly his Harriet, yet only, I know, in hopes to divert her and us all. But my jesting days are over, my situation will not bear it. Yet if it will divert him, let him railly.

I shall be so much importuned to stay longer than I ought or will stay, that I may as well fix a peremptory day at once. Will you, my ever-indulgent friends, allow me to set out for Selby House on Friday next?—not on a Sunday, as Lady Betty Williams advises, for fear of the odious waggons? But I have been in a different school. Sir Charles Grandison, I find, makes it a tacit rule with him never to begin a journey on a Sunday, nor, except when in pursuit of works of mercy or necessity, to travel in time of Divine service. And this rule he observed last Sunday, though he reached us here in the evening. Oh, my grandmamma, how much is he what you all are and ever have been! But he is now pursuing a work of mercy. God succeed to him the end of his pursuit!

But why tacit? you will ask. Is Sir Charles Grandison ashamed to make an open appearance in behalf of his Christian duties? He is not. For instance, I have never seen him sit down at his own table, in the absence of Dr

Bartlett or some other clergyman, but he himself says grace, and that with such an easy dignity as commands every one's reverence, and which is succeeded by a cheerfulness that looks as if he were the better pleased for having shown a thankful heart.

Dr. Bartlett has also told me that he begins and ends every day, either in his chamber or in his study, in a manner worthy of one who is in earnest in his Christian profession; but he never frights gay company with grave maxims. I remember one day Mr. Grandison asked him, in his absurd way, why he did not preach to his company now and then? "Faith, Sir Charles," said he, "if you did you would reform many a poor ignorant sinner of us, since you could do it with more weight and more certainty of attention than any parson in Christendom."

"It would be an affront," said Sir Charles, "to the understanding as well as education of a man who took rank above a peasant, in such a country as this, to seem to question whether he knew his general duties or not, and the necessity of practising what he knew of them. If he should be at a loss, he may once a week be reminded and his heart kept warm. Let you and me, cousin Everard, show our conviction by our practice, and not invade the clergyman's province."

I remember that Mr. Grandison showed his conviction by his blushes, and by repeating the three little words, "You and me, Sir Charles."

Sunday evening.

Oh, my dear friends, I have a strange, a shocking piece of intelligence to give you. Emily has just been with me in tears. She begged to speak with me in private. When we were alone she threw her arms about my neck. "Ah, madam," said she, "I am come to tell you that there is a person in the world that I hate, and must and will hate, as long as I live. It is Lady Olivia. Take me down

with you into Northamptonshire, and never let me see her more."

I was surprised.

"Oh, madam! I have found out that she would, on Thursday last, have killed my guardian."

I was astonished, Lucy.

"They retired together, you know, madam. He came from her, his face in a glow, and he sent in his sister to her, and went not in himself till afterwards. She would have had him put off his journey. She was enraged because he would not, and they were high together; and at last she pulled out of her stays in fury a poniard, and vowed to plunge it into his heart. He should never, she said, see his Clementina more. He went to her. Her heart failed her. Well it might, you know, madam! He seized her hand. He took it from her. She struggled, and in struggling her wrist was hurt: that's the meaning of the broad black riband! Wicked creature to have such a thought in her heart! He only said, when he had got it from her, 'Unhappy, violent woman, I return not this instrument of mischief. You will have no use for it in England'—and would not let her have it again."

I shuddered. "Oh, my dear," said I, "he has been a sufferer, we are told, by good women: but this is not a good woman. But can it be true? Who informed you of it?"

"Lady Maffei herself. She thought that Sir Charles must have spoken of it; and when she found he had not, she was sorry she had, and begged I would not tell anybody; but I could not keep it from you. And she says that Lady Olivia is grieved on the remembrance of it, and arraigns herself and her wicked passion, and the more for his noble forgiveness of her on the spot, and recommending her afterwards to the civilities of his sisters and their lords. But I hate her for all that."

"Faulty but unhappy Olivia," said I. "But what, my Emily, are we women, who should be the meekest and

"I forgive and pity you, madam," said he.

tenderest of the whole animal creation, when we give way to passion! But if she is so penitent, let not the shocking attempt be known to his sisters or their lords. I may take the liberty of mentioning it in strict confidence" (observe that, Lucy) "to those from whom I keep not any secret; but let it not be divulged to any of the relations of Sir Charles. Their detestation of her, which must follow, would not be concealed; and the unhappy creature, made desperate, might—who knows what she might do?"

The dear girl ran on upon what might have been the consequence, and what a loss the world would have had if the horrid fact had been perpetrated. Lady Maffei told her, however, that, had not her heart relented, she might have done him mischief: for he was too rash in approaching her. She fell down on her knees to him as soon as he had wrested the poniard from her. "I forgive and pity you, madam," said he, with an air that had, as Olivia and her aunt have recollected since, both majesty and compassion in it; but against her entreaty he would withdraw, yet, at her request, sent in Lady L. to her; and, going into his study, told not even Dr. Bartlett of it, though he went to him there immediately.

From the consciousness of this violence perhaps the lady was more temperate afterwards, even to the very time of his departure.

. . . . . .

Lord bless me! what shall I do? Lady D. has sent a card to let me know that she will wait upon Mrs. Reeves and me to-morrow to breakfast. She comes, no doubt, to tell me that Sir Charles, having no thoughts of Harriet Byron, Lord D. may have hopes of succeeding with her; and perhaps her ladyship will plead Sir Charles's recommendation and interest in Lord D.'s favour. But should this plea be made, good Heaven! give me patience. I am afraid I shall be uncivil to this excellent woman.

LETTERS XXV.–XXVII. (Vol. iv.) *contain chiefly comments on what has gone before, notice of Lady Olivia's attempt to stab Sir Charles, and preparations for Miss Byron's intended return to her home in Northamptonshire, with some further accounts of the bickerings between Lord and Lady G.*

LETTER XXVIII [iv]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Tuesday night.

I AM just returned from St. James's Square.

But first I should tell you that I had a visit from Lady Olivia and Lady Maffei. Our conversation was in Italian and French. Lady Olivia and I had a quarter of an hour's discourse in private: you may guess at our subject. She is not without that tenderness of heart which is the indispensable characteristic of a woman. She lamented the violence of her temper in a manner so affecting that I cannot help pitying her, though at the instant I had in my head a certain attempt that makes me shudder whenever I think of it. She regrets my going to Northamptonshire so soon. I have promised to return her visit to-morrow in the afternoon.

She sets out on Friday next for Oxford. She wished I could accompany her. She resolves to see all that is worth seeing in the Western Circuit, as I may call it. She observes, she says, that Sir Charles Grandison's sisters and their lords are very particularly engaged at present, and are in expectation of a call to Windsor to attend Lord W.'s nuptials. She

will, therefore, having attendants enough, and two men of consideration in her train, one of whom is not unacquainted with England, take cursory tours over the kingdom, having a taste for travelling, and finding it a great relief to her spirits; and when Lady L. and Lady G. are more disengaged, will review the seats and places which she shall think worthy of a second visit in their company.

She professed to like the people here and the face of the country, and talked favourably of the religion of it. But, poor woman, she likes all those the better, I doubt not, for the sake of one Englishman. Love, Lucy, gilds every object which bears a relation to the person beloved.

Lady Maffei was very free in blaming her niece for this excursion. She took her chiding patiently, but yet, like a person that thought it too much in her power to gratify the person blaming her to pay much regard to what she said.

I took a chair to Lady G.'s. Emily ran to meet me in the hall. She threw her arms about me. "I rejoice you are come," said she. "Did you not meet the house in the square?"

"What means my Emily?"

"Why, it has been flung out of the windows, as the saying is. Ah, madam, we are all to pieces. One so careless, the other so passionate! But, hush, here comes Lady G."

Take, Lucy, in the dialogue way, particulars.

Lady G.—"Then you are come at last, Harriet. You wrote that you would not come near me."

Harriet.—"I did; but I could not stay away. Ah, Lady G., you will destroy your own happiness."

Lady G.—"So you wrote. Not one word on the subject you hint at that you have ever said or written before. I hate repetitions, child."

Harriet.—"Then I must be silent upon it."

Lady G.—"Not of necessity. You can say new things upon old subjects. But, hush! Here comes the man." She

ran to her harpsichord. "Is this it, Harriet?"—and touched the keys, repeating—

"Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon she sooth'd——"

Enter Lord G.

Lord G.—"Miss Byron, I am your most obedient servant. The sight of you rejoices my soul. Madam" (to his lady), "you have not been long enough together to begin a tune. I know what this is for."

Lady G.—"Harmony, harmony is a charming thing. But I, poor I! know not any but what this simple instrument affords me."

Lord G. (lifting up his hands).—"Harmony, madam! God is my witness—but I will lay everything before Miss Byron."

Lady G.—"You need not, my lord: she knows as much as she can know already, except the fine colourings be added to the woeful tale that your unbridled spirit can give it. Have you my long letter about you, Harriet?"

"*Lord G.*—"And could you, madam, have the heart to write——"

Lady G.—"Why, my lord, do you mince the matter? For 'heart' say 'courage.' You may speak as plain in Miss Byron's presence as you did before she came: I know what you mean."

Lord G.—"Let it be courage then."

Harriet.—"Fie, fie, Lord G. Fie, fie, Lady G. What lengths do you run! If I understand the matter right, you have both, like children, been at play till you have fallen out."

Lord G.—"If, Miss Byron, you know the truth, and can blame me——"

Harriet.—"I blame you only, my lord, for being in a passion. You see, my lady is serene; she keeps her temper; she looks as if she wanted to be friends with you."

Lord G.—"Oh that cursed serenity! When my soul is torn by a whirlwind——"

Lady G.—"A good tragedy rant! But, Harriet, you are mistaken: my Lord G. is a very passionate man. So humble, so—what shall I call it?—before marriage. Did not the man see what a creature I was? To bear with me when he had no obligation to me, and not now, when he has the highest. A miserable sinking! O Harriet, Harriet! Never, never marry."

Harriet.—"Dear Lady G., you know in your own heart you are wrong—indeed you are wrong."

Lord G.—"God for ever reward you, madam! I will tell you how it began——"

Lady G.—"'Began!' She knows that already, I tell you, my lord. But what has passed within these four hours she knows not: you may entertain her with that, if you please. It was just about the time this day is a week that we were all together, mighty comfortably, at St. George's, Hanover Square."

Lord G.—"Every tittle of what you promised there, madam——"

Lady G.—"And I, my lord, could be your echo in this were I not resolved to keep my temper, as you cannot but say I have done all along."

Lord G.—"You could not, madam, if you did not despise me."

Lady G.—"You are wrong, my lord, to think so; but you don't believe yourself. If you did, the pride of your heart ought not to permit you to own it."

Lord G.—"Miss Byron, give me leave——"

Lady G.—"Lord bless me! that people are so fond of exposing themselves. Had you taken my advice when you pursued me out of my dressing-room into company—'My lord,' said I, as mildly as I now speak, 'don't expose yourself.' But he was not at all the wiser for my advice."

Lord G.—"Miss Byron, you see—but I had not come down but to make my compliments to you." He bowed and was about to withdraw.

I took him by the sleeve. "My lord, you must not go. Lady G., if your own heart justifies you for your part in this misunderstanding, say so. I challenge you to say so." She was silent.

Harriet.—"If otherwise, own your fault, promise amendment—ask pardon."

Lady G.—"Hey-day!"

Harriet.—"And my lord will ask yours for mistaking you—for being too easily provoked——"

Lord G.—"Too easily, madam——"

Harriet.—"What generous man would not smile at the foibles of a woman whose heart is only gay with prosperity and lively youth, but has not the least malice in it? Has not she made choice of your lordship in preference of any other man? She raillies every one: she can't help it. She is to blame. Indeed, Lady G., you are. Your brother felt your edge; he once smarted by it, and was angry with you. But afterwards, observing that it was her way, my lord, that it was a kind of constitutional gaiety of heart, and exercised on those she loved best, he forgave, raillied her again, and turned her own weapons upon her; and every one in company was delighted with the spirit of both. You love her, my lord."

Lord G.—"Never man more loved a woman. I am not an ill-natured man——"

Lady G.—"But a captious, a passionate one, Lord G. Who'd have thought it!"

Lord G.—"Never was there, my dear Miss Byron, such a strangely aggravating creature. She could not be so if she did not despise me."

Lady G.—"Fiddle-faddle, silly man! And so you said before. If you thought so, you take the way (don't you?) to mend the matter by dancing and capering about, and

putting yourself into all manner of disagreeable attitudes, and even sometimes being ready to foam at the mouth? I told him, Miss Byron—there he stands: let him deny it if he can—that I married a man with another face. Would not any other man have taken this for a compliment to his natural undistorted face, and instantly have pulled off the ugly mask of passion and shown his own?"

Lord G.—"You see, you see the air, Miss Byron! How ludicrously does she now, even now!"

Lady G.—"See, Miss Byron! How captious! Lord G. ought to have a termagant wife, one who could return rage for rage. Meekness is my crime. I cannot be put out of temper. Meekness was never before attributed to woman as a fault."

Lord G.—"Good God! Meekness! Good God!"

Lady G.—"But, Harriet, do you judge on which side the grievance lies. Lord G. presents me with a face for his that I never saw him wear before marriage: he has cheated me therefore. I show him the same face that I ever wore, and treat him pretty much in the same manner (or I am mistaken) that I ever did; and what reason can he give that will not demonstrate him to be the most ungrateful of men for the airs he gives himself—airs that he would not have presumed to put on eight days ago? Who then, Harriet, has reason to complain of grievance—my lord or I?"

Lord G.—"You see, Miss Byron—can there be any arguing with a woman who knows herself to be in jest in all she says?"

Harriet.—"Why, then, my lord, make a jest of it. What will not bear an argument will not be worth one's anger."

Lord G.—"I leave it to Miss Byron, Lady G., to decide between us as she pleases."

Lady G.—"You'd better leave it to me, sir."

Harriet.—"Do, my lord."

Lord G.—"Well, madam! And what is your decree?"

Lady G.—"You, Miss Byron, had best be lady chancellor after all. I should not bear to have my decree disputed after it is pronounced."

Harriet.—"If I must, my decree is this: You, Lady G., shall own yourself in fault and promise amendment. My lord shall forgive you, and promise that he will, for the future, endeavour to distinguish between your good and your ill-nature; that he will sit down to jest with your jest, and never be disturbed at what you say, when he sees it accompanied with that archness of eye and lip which you put on to your brother, and to every one whom you best love, when you are disposed to be teasingly facetious."

Lady G.—"Why, Harriet, you have given Lord G. a clue to find me out and spoil all my sport."

Harriet.—"What say you, my lord?"

Lord G.—"Will Lady G. own herself in fault, as you propose?"

Lady G.—"Odious recrimination! I leave you together. I never was in fault in my life. Am I not a woman? If my lord will ask pardon for his froppishness, as we say of children——"

She stopped, and pretended to be going.

Harriet.—"That my lord shall not do, Charlotte. You have carried the jest too far already. My lord shall preserve his dignity for his wife's sake. My lord, you will not permit Lady G. to leave us, however?"

He took her hand and pressed it with his lips. "For God's sake, madam, let us be happy: it is in your power to make us both so; it ever shall be in your power. If I have been in fault, impute it to my love. I cannot bear your contempt, and I never will deserve it."

Lady G.—"Why could not this have been said some hours ago? Why, slighting my early caution, would you expose yourself?"

I took her aside. "Be generous, Lady G. Let not your husband be the only person to whom you are not so."

Lady G. (whispering).—"Our quarrel has not run half its length. If we make up here we shall make up clumsily. One of the silliest things in the world is a quarrel that ends not, as a coachman after a journey comes in, with a spirit. We shall certainly renew it."

Harriet.—"Take the caution you gave to my lord: don't expose yourself. And another, that you cannot more effectually do so than by exposing your husband. I am more than half ashamed of you. You are not the Charlotte I once thought you were. Let me see if you have any regard to my good opinion of you, that you can own an error with some grace."

Lady G.—"I am a meek, humble, docile creature." She turned to me, and made me a rustic courtesy, her hands before her. "I'll try for it; tell me if I am right." Then stepping towards my lord, who was with his back to us, looking out at the window—and he turning about to her bowing—"My lord," said she, "Miss Byron has been telling me more than I knew before of my duty. She proposes herself one day to make a won-der-ful obedient wife. It would have been well for you, perhaps, had I had her example to walk by. She seems to say that, now I am married, I must be grave, sage, and passive; that smiles will hardly become me; that I must be prim and formal, and reverence my husband. If you think this behaviour will become a married woman, and expect it from me, pray, my lord, put me right by your frowns, whenever I shall be wrong. For the future, if I ever find myself disposed to be very light-hearted, I will ask your leave before I give way to it. And now, what is next to be done?" humorously courtesying, her hands before her.

He clasped her in his arms. "Dear, provoking creature! This—this is next to be done. I ask you but to love me half as much as I love you, and I shall be the happiest man on earth."

"My lord," said I, "you ruin all by this condescension on

"And now, what is next to be done?"

a speech and air so ungracious. If this is all you get by it,

never, never, my lord, fall out again. O Charlotte! If you are not generous, you come off much, much too easily."

"Well, now, my lord," said she, holding out her hand as if threatening me, "let you and me, man and wife like, join against the interposer in our quarrels. Harriet, I will not forgive you for this last part of your lecture."

And thus was this idle quarrel made up. All that vexes me on the occasion is that it was not made up with dignity on my lord's part. His honest heart so overflowed with joy at his lips that the naughty creature, by her arch leers, every now and then showed that she was sensible of her consequence to his happiness. But, Lucy, don't let her sink too low in your esteem: she has many fine qualities.

They prevailed on me to stay supper. Emily rejoiced in the reconciliation: her heart was, as I may say, visible in her joy. Can I love her better than I do? If I could, she would, every time I see her, give me reason for it.

LETTERS XXIX.–XXXV. (Vol. iv.) *begin with a fresh but, of course, fruitless proposal for Miss Byron's hand, in his nephew's favour, by Sir Rowland Meredith (in reply to which she avows her affection for Sir Charles, be he contracted or not), proceed to an account of her journey home, and include in their later numbers epistles to her from Emily Jervois and Lady G., respecting the conduct of the latter to Lord G., &c.*

LETTER XXXVI [iv]

LADY G. TO MISS BYRON

Saturday, May 6.

I THANK you, Harriet, for yours. What must your fellows think of you? In this gross age your delicacy must astonish them.

There used to be more of it formerly. But how should men know anything of it when women have forgot it? We females, since we have been admitted into so constant a share of the public diversions, want not courage. We can give the men stare for stare wherever we meet them. The next age, nay, the rising generation must surely be all heroes and heroines. But whither has this word delicacy carried me, me who, it seems, have faults to be corrected for of another sort, and who want not the courage for which I congratulate others?

But to other subjects. I could write a vast deal of stuff about my lord and self, and Lord and Lady L., who assume parts which I know not how to allow them; and sometimes they threaten me with my brother's resentments, sometimes with my Harriet's, so that I must really have leading-strings fastened to my shoulders. Oh, my dear, a fond husband is a surfeiting thing, and yet I believe most women love to be made monkeys of.

. . . . . .

But all other subjects must now give way. We have heard of, though not from my brother. A particular friend of Mr. Lowther was here with a letter from that gentleman, acquainting us that Sir Charles and he were arrived at Paris.

Mr. Beauchamp was with us when Mr. Lowther's friend came. He borrowed the letter on account of the extraordinary adventure mentioned in it.

Make your heart easy in the first place about Sir Hargrave. He is indeed in town, but very ill. He was frighted into England, and intends not ever again to quit it. In all probability he owes it to my brother that he exists.

Mr. Beauchamp went directly to Cavendish Square, and informed himself there of other particulars relating to the affair, from the very servant who was present and acting in it; and from those particulars and Mr. Lowther's letter, wrote one for Dr. Bartlett. Mr. Beauchamp obliged me with the perusal of what he wrote, whence I have extracted the following

account, for his letter is long and circumstantial, and I did not ask his leave to take a copy, as he seemed desirous to hasten it to the doctor.

On Wednesday, the 19–30 of April, in the evening, as my brother was pursuing his journey to Paris and was within two miles of that capital, a servant-man rode up in visible terror to his post-chaise, in which were Mr. Lowther and himself, and besought them to hear his dreadful tale. The gentlemen stopped, and he told them that his master, who was an Englishman, and his friend of the same nation, had been but a little while before attacked and forced out of the road in their post-chaise, as he doubted not to be murdered, by no less than seven armed horsemen; and he pointed to a hill at a distance, called Mont Martre, behind which they were at that moment perpetrating their bloody purpose. He had just before, he said, addressed himself to two other gentlemen and their retinue, who drove on the faster for it.

The servant's great-coat was open, and Sir Charles, observing his livery, asked him if he were not a servant of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen? and was answered in the affirmative.

There are, it seems, trees planted on each side the road from St. Denis to Paris, but which, as France is an open and unenclosed country, would not, but for the hill, have hindered the seeing a great way off the scuffling of so many men on horseback. There is also a ditch on either hand, but places left for owners to come at their grounds with their carts and other carriages. Sir Charles ordered the post-boy to drive to one of those passages, saying, "He could not forgive himself if he did not endeavour to save Sir Hargrave and his friend," whose name, the man told him, was Merceda.

His own servants were three in number, besides one of Mr. Lowther. My brother made Mr. Lowther's servant dismount, and, getting himself on his horse, ordered the others to follow him. He begged Mr. Lowther to continue in the chaise, bidding the dismounted servant stay and attend

his master, and galloped away towards the hill. His ears were soon pierced with the cries of the poor wretches, and presently he saw two men on horseback holding the horses of four others, who had under them the two gentlemen, struggling, groaning, and crying out for mercy.

Sir Charles, who was a good way ahead of his servants, calling out to spare the gentlemen, and bending his course to relieve the prostrate sufferers, two of the four quitted their prey, and, mounting, joined the other two horsemen, and advanced to meet him with a show of supporting the two men on foot in their violence, who continued laying on the wretches with the butt-ends of their whips unmercifully.

As the assailants offered not to fly, and as they had more than time enough to execute their purpose, had it been robbery and murder, Sir Charles concluded it was likely that these men were actuated by a private revenge. He was confirmed in this surmise when the four men on horseback, though each had his pistol ready drawn, as Sir Charles also had his, demanded a conference, warning Sir Charles how he provoked his fate by his rashness, and declaring that he was a dead man if he fired.

"Forbear, then," said Sir Charles, "all further violences to the gentlemen, and I will hear what you have to say."

He then put his pistol into his holster, and one of his servants being come up, and the two others at hand (to whom he called out not to fire till they had his orders), he gave him his horse's reins, bidding him have an eye to the holsters of both, and leapt down, and, drawing his sword, made towards the two men who were so cruelly exercising their whips, and who, on his approach, retired to some little distance, drawing their hangers.

The four men on horseback joined the two on foot just as they were quitting the objects of their fury, and one of them said, "Forbear, for the present, further violence, brother; the gentleman shall be told the cause of all this. Murder, sir,"

said he, "is not intended, nor are we robbers: the men whom you are solicitous to save from our vengeance are villains."

"Be the cause what it will," answered Sir Charles, "you are in a country noted for doing speedy justice, upon proper application to the magistrates." In the same instant he raised first one groaning man, then the other. Their heads were all over bloody, and they were so much bruised that they could not extend their arms to reach their wigs and hats, which lay near them, nor put them on without Sir Charles's help.

The men on foot by this time had mounted their horses, and all six stood upon their defence; but one of them was so furious, crying out that his vengeance should be yet more complete, that two of the others could hardly restrain him.

Sir Charles asked Sir Hargrave and Mr. Merceda whether they had reason to look upon themselves as injured men or injurers. One of the assailants answered "that they both knew themselves to be villains."

Either from consciousness or terror, perhaps from both, they could not speak for themselves but by groans, nor could either of them stand or sit upright.

Just then came up in the chaise Mr. Lowther and his servant, each a pistol in his hand. He quitted the chaise when he came near the suffering men, and Sir Charles desired him instantly to examine whether the gentlemen were dangerously hurt or not.

The most enraged of the assailants, having slipped by the two who were earnest to restrain him, would again have attacked Mr. Merceda, offering a stroke at him with his hanger; but Sir Charles (his drawn sword still in his hand) caught hold of his bridle, and, turning his horse's head aside, diverted a stroke which, in all probability, would otherwise have been a finishing one.

They all came about Sir Charles, bidding him at his peril use his sword upon their friend, and Sir Charles's servants were coming up to their master's support had there been

occasion. At that instant Mr. Lowther, assisted by his own servant, was examining the wounds and bruises of the two terrified men, who had yet no reason to think themselves safe from further violence.

Sir Charles repeatedly commanded his servants not to fire nor approach nearer without his orders. "The persons," said he to the assailants, "whom you have so cruelly used are Englishmen of condition. I will protect them. Be the provocation what it will, you must know that your attempt upon them is a criminal one; and if my friend last come up, who is a very skilful surgeon, shall pronounce them in danger, you shall find it so."

Still he held the horse of the furious one, and three of them, who seemed to be principals, were beginning to express some resentment at this cavalier treatment, when Mr. Lowther gave his opinion that there was no apparent danger of death; and then Sir Charles, quitting the man's bridle and putting himself between the assailants and sufferers, said "that as they had not either offered to fly or to be guilty of violence to himself, his friend, or servants, he was afraid they had some reason to think themselves ill-used by the gentlemen. But, however, as they could not suppose they were at liberty, in a civilised country, to take their revenge on the persons of those who were entitled to the protection of that country, he should expect that they would hold themselves to be personally answerable for their conduct at a proper tribunal."

"The villains," said one of the men, "know who we are and the provocation, which merits a worse treatment than they have hitherto met with. You, sir," proceeded he, "seem to be a man of honour and temper: we are men of honour as well as you. Our design, as we told you, was not to kill the miscreants, but to give them reason to remember their villainy as long as they lived, and to put it out of their power ever to be guilty of the like. They have made a vile attempt," continued he, "on a lady's honour at Abbeville,

and, finding themselves detected and in danger, took round-about ways, and shifted from one vehicle to another, to escape the vengeance of her friends. The gentleman whose horse you held, and who has reason to be in a passion, is the husband of the lady" (a Spanish husband, surely, Harriet; not a French one, according to our notions). "That gentleman and that are her brothers. We have been in pursuit of them two days, for they gave out, in order, no doubt, to put us on a wrong scent, that they were to go to Antwerp."

And it seems, my dear, that Sir Hargrave and his colleague had actually sent some of their servants that way, which was the reason that they were themselves attended but by one.

The gentleman told Sir Charles that there was a third villain in their plot. They had hopes, he said, that he would not escape the close pursuit of a manufacturer at Abbeville, whose daughter, a lovely young creature, he had seduced under promises of marriage. Their government, he observed, were great countenancers of the manufacturers at Abbeville, and he would have reason, if he were laid hold of, to think himself happy if he came off with being obliged to perform his promises.

This third wretch must be Mr. Bagenhall. "The Lord grant," say I, "that he may be laid hold of, and obliged to make a ruined girl an honest woman, as they phrase it in Lancashire." Don't you wish so, my dear? And let me add that, had the relations of the injured lady completed their intended vengeance on those two libertines (a very proper punishment, I ween, for all libertines), it might have helped them to pass the rest of their lives with great tranquillity; and honest girls might, for any contrivances of theirs, have passed to and from masquerades without molestation.

Sir Hargrave and his companion intended, it seems, at first to make some resistance—four only of the seven stopping the chaise; but when the other three came up,

and they saw who they were and knew their own guilt, their courage failed them.

The seventh man was set over the post-boy, whom he had led about half-a-mile from the spot they had chosen as a convenient one for their purpose.

Sir Hargrave's servant was secured by them at their first attack; but, after they had disarmed him and his masters, he found an opportunity to slip from them, and made the best of his way to the road, in hopes of procuring assistance for them.

While Sir Charles was busy in helping the bruised wretches on their feet, the seventh man came up to the others, followed by Sir Hargrave's chaise. The assailants had retired to some distance, and, after a consultation together, they all advanced towards Sir Charles, who, bidding his servants be on their guard, leapt on his horse with that agility and presence of mind for which, Mr. Beauchamp says, he excels most men, and leading towards them, "Do you advance, gentlemen," said he, "as friends or otherwise?" Mr. Lowther took a pistol in each hand, and held himself ready to support him, and the servants disposed themselves to obey their master's orders.

"Our enmity," answered one of them, "is only to these two inhospitable villains; murder, as we told you, was not our design. They know where we are to be found, and that they are the vilest of men, and have not been punished equal to their demerits. Let them on their knees ask this gentleman's pardon," pointing to the husband of the insulted lady. "We insist upon this satisfaction, and upon their promise that they never more will come within two leagues of Abbeville, and we will leave them in your protection."

I fancy, Harriet, that these women-frightening heroes needed not to have been urged to make this promise.

Sir Charles, turning towards them, said, "If you have done wrong, gentlemen, you ought not to scruple asking

pardon. If you know yourselves to be innocent, though I should be loth to risk the lives of my friend and servants, yet shall not my countrymen make so undue a submission."

The wretches kneeled, and the seven men, civilly saluting Sir Charles and Mr. Lowther, rode off, to the joy of the two delinquents, who kneeled again to their deliverer, and poured forth blessings upon the man whose life so lately one of them sought, and whose preservation he had now so much reason to rejoice in, for the sake of his own safety.

My brother himself could not but be well pleased that he was not obliged to come to extremities, which might have ended fatally on both sides.

By this time Sir Hargrave's post-chaise was come up. He and his colleague were with difficulty lifted into it. My brother and Mr. Lowther went into theirs, and being but a small distance from Paris, they proceeded thither in company, the poor wretches blessing them all the way, and at Paris found their other servants waiting for them.

Sir Charles and Mr. Lowther saw them in bed in the lodgings that had been taken for them. They were so stiff with the bastinado they had met with that they were unable to help themselves. Mr. Merceda had been more severely (I cannot call it more cruelly) treated than the other; for he, it seems, was the greatest malefactor in the attempt made upon the lady; and he had, besides, two or three gashes which, but for his struggles, would have been but one.

As you, my dear, always turn pale when the word masquerade is mentioned, so, I warrant, will Abbeville be a word of terror to these wretches as long as they live.

Their enemies, it seems, carried off their arms, perhaps in the true spirit of French chivalry, with a view to lay them, as so many trophies, at the feet of the insulted lady.

Mr. Lowther writes that my brother and he are lodged in the hotel of a man of quality, a dear friend of the late Mr. Danby, and one of the three whom he has remembered in his

Kneeled again to their deliverer.

will; and that Sir Charles is extremely busy in relation to the executorship, and having not a moment to spare, desired Mr. Lowther to engage his friend, to whom he wrote, to let us know as much, and that he was hastening everything for his journey onwards.

Mr. Beauchamp's narrative of this affair is, as I told you, very circumstantial. I thought to have shortened it more than I have done. I wish I have not made my abstract confused in several material places, but I have not time to clear it up. Adieu, my dear.

CHARLOTTE G.

LETTER XXXVII [iv]

LADY G. TO MISS BYRON

Sunday, May 7.

I BELIEVE I shall become as arrant a scribbler as somebody else. I begin to like writing. A great compliment to you, I assure you. I see one may bring one's mind to anything. I thought I must have had recourse, when you and my brother left us and when I was married, to the public amusements to fill up my leisure; and as I have seen everything worth seeing of those many times over (masquerades excepted, and them I despise), time, you know, in that case would have passed a little heavily, after having shown myself, and, by seeing who and who were together, laid in a little store of the right sort of conversation for the tea-table. For you know, Harriet, that among us modern fine people the company, and not the entertainment, is the principal part of the raree-show. Pretty enough to make the entertainment and pay for it, too, to the honest fellows who have nothing to do but to project schemes to get us together.

I don't know what to do with this man. I little thought that I was to be considered as such a doll, such a toy as he would make me. I want to drive him out of the house without me, were it but to purvey for me news and scandal. What are your fine gentlemen fit for else? You know that with all my faults I have a domestic and managing turn. A man should encourage that in a wife, and not be perpetually teasing her for her company abroad, unless he did it with a view to keep her at home. Our sex don't love to be prescribed to, even in the things to which they are not naturally averse; and for this very reason perhaps because it becomes us to submit to prescription. Human nature, Harriet, is a perverse thing. I believe, if my good man wished me to stay at home, I should torture my brain, as other good wives do, for inventions to go abroad.

It was but yesterday that, in order to give him a hint, I pinned my apron to his coat, without considering who was likely to be a sufferer by it; and he, getting up in his usual nimble way, gave it a rent, and then looked behind him with so much apprehension—hands folded, bag in motion from shoulder to shoulder. I was vexed too much to make the use of the trick which I had designed, and huffed him. He made excuses and looked pitifully, bringing in his soul to testify that he knew not how it could be. How it could be, wretch, when you are always squatting upon one's clothes in defiance of hoop or distance!

He went out directly and brought me in two aprons, either of which was worth twenty of that he so carelessly rent. Who could be angry with him? I was, indeed, thinking to chide him for this, as if I were not to be trusted to buy my own clothes; but he looked at me with so good-natured an eye that I relented, and accepted, with a bow of graciousness, his present, only calling him an odd creature—and that he is, you know, my dear.

We live very whimsically in the main—not above four

Looked behind him with so much apprehension.

quarrels, however, and as many more chidings in a day. What does the man stay at home for, then, so much when I am at home? Married people, by frequent absences, may have a chance for a little happiness. How many debatings, if not direct quarrels, are saved by the good man's and his meek wife's seeing each other but once or twice a week! In what can men and women who are much together employ themselves but in proving and defending, quarrelling and making up?—especially if they both chance to marry for love (which, thank Heaven, is not altogether my case); for then both honest souls, having promised more happiness to each other than they can possibly meet with, have nothing to do but reproach each other, at least tacitly, for their disappointment. A great deal of freemasonry in love, my dear, believe me! The secret, like that, when found out, is hardly worth the knowing.

"Well, but what silly rattle is this, Charlotte?" methinks you say, and put on one of your wisest looks.

No matter, Harriet. There may be some wisdom in much folly. Every one speaks not out so plainly as I do. But when the novelty of an acquisition or change of condition is over, be the change or the acquisition what it will, the principal pleasure is over, and other novelties are hunted after to keep the pool of life from stagnating.

This is a serious truth, my dear, and I expect you to praise me for it. You are very sparing of your praise to poor me, and yet I had rather have your good word than any woman's in the world—or man's either, I was going to say; but I should then have forgot my brother. As for Lord G., were I to accustom him to obligingness, I should destroy my own consequence, for then it would be no novelty, and he would be hunting after a new folly. Very true, Harriet.

Well, but we have had a good serious falling-out, and it still subsists. It began on Friday night—present, Lord and Lady L. and Emily. I was very angry with him for bringing it on before them. The man has no discretion, my dear—none at

all. And what about? Why, we have not made our appearance at court, forsooth.

A very confident thing this same appearance, I think. A compliment made to fine clothes and jewels, at the expense of modesty.

Lord G. pleads decorum. Decorum against modesty, my dear! But if by decorum is meant fashion, I have in a hundred instances found decorum beat modesty out of the house. And as my brother, who would have been our principal honour on such an occasion, is gone abroad, and as ours is an elderly novelty, as I may say (our fineries were not ready, you know, before my brother went), I was fervent against it.

"I was the only woman of condition in England who would be against it."

I told my lord that was a reflection on my sex; but Lord and Lady L., who had been spoken to, I believe, by Lady Gertrude, were both on his side (I shall have this man utterly ruined for a husband among you). When there were three to one, it would have looked cowardly to yield, you know. I was brave; but it being proposed for Sunday, and that being at a little distance, it was not doubted but I would comply. So the night passed off with prayings, hopings, and a little mutteration (allow me that word, or find me a better). The entreaty was renewed in the morning, but, no! "I was ashamed of him," he said. I asked him "if he really thought so?"—"He should think so if I refused him."—"Heaven forbid, my lord, that I, who contend for the liberty of acting, should hinder you from the liberty of thinking. Only one piece of advice, honest friend," said I. "Don't imagine the worst against yourself; and another, If you have a mind to carry a point with me, don't bring on the cause before anybody else, for that would be to doubt either my duty or your own reasonableness."

As sure as you are alive, Harriet, the man made an exception against being called honest friend—as if, as I told him

either of the words were incompatible with quality. So once he was as froppish as a child on my calling him the man—a higher distinction, I think, than if I had called him a king or a prince. *The man!* Strange creature! to except to a distinction that implies that he is the man of men. You see what a captious mortal I have been forced to call my lord. But lord and master do not always go together, though they do too often for the happiness of many a meek soul of our sex.

Well, this debate seemed suspended by my telling him that if I were presented at court I would not have either the earl or Lady Gertrude go with us, the very people who were most desirous to be there. But I might not think of that at the time, you know. I would not be thought very perverse, only a little whimsical or so; and I wanted not an excellent reason for excluding them. "Are their consents to our past affair doubted, my lord," said I, "that you think it necessary for them to appear to justify us?"

He could say nothing to this, you know; and I should never forgive the husband, as I told him on another occasion, who would pretend to argue when he had nothing to say.

Then (for the baby will be always craving something) he wanted me to go abroad with him—I forget whither—but to some place that he supposed (poor man!) I should like to visit. I told him I dared to say he wished to be thought a modern husband and a fashionable man; and he would get a bad name if he could never stir out without his wife. Neither could he answer that, you know.

Well, we went on—mutter, mutter, grumble, grumble, the thunder rolling at a distance—a little impatience now and then, however, portending that it would come nearer. But as yet it was only, "Pray, my dear, oblige me," and, "Pray, my lord, excuse me," till this morning, when he had the assurance to be pretty peremptory, hinting that the lord-in-waiting had been spoke to. A fine time of it would a wife have if she were not at liberty to dress herself as she pleases.

Were I to choose again, I do assure you, my dear, it should not be a man who, by his taste for moths and butterflies, shells, china, and such-like trifles, would give me warning that he would presume to dress his baby, and when he had done would perhaps admire his own fancy more than her person. I believe, my Harriet, I shall make you afraid of matrimony; but I will pursue my subject for all that.

When the insolent saw that I did not dress as he would have had me, he drew out his face, glouting, to half the length of my arm, but was silent. Soon after, Lady L. sending to know whether her lord and she were to attend us to the drawing-room, and I returning for answer that I should be glad of their company at dinner, he was in violent wrath, true as you are alive, and dressing himself in a great hurry, left the house without saying "By your leave," "With your leave," or whether he would return to dinner or not. Very pretty doings, Harriet.

Lord and Lady L. came to dinner, however. I thought they were very kind, and, till they opened their lips, was going to thank them, for then it was all elder sister and insolent brother-in-law, I do assure you. Upon my word, Harriet, they took upon them.

Lady L. told me I might be the happiest creature in the world if—and there was so good as to stop.

"One of the happiest only, Lady L.! Who can be happier than you?"

"But I," said she, "should neither be so nor deserve to be so, if——" Good of her again to stop at "if."

"We cannot be all of one mind," replied I. "I shall be wiser in time."

Where was poor Lord G. gone?

"Poor Lord G. is gone to seek his fortune, I believe."

What did I mean?

I told them the airs he had given himself, and that he was gone without leave or notice of return.

He had served me right, ab-solutely right, Lord L. said.

I believed so myself. Lord G. was a very good sort of man, and ought not to bear with me so much as he had done; but it would be kind in them not to tell him what I had owned.

The earl lifted up one hand, the countess both. They had not come to dine with me, they said, after the answer I had returned, but as they were afraid something was wrong between us.

"Mediators are not to be of one side only," I said; and as they had been so kindly free in blaming me, I hoped they would be as free with him when they saw him.

And then it was, "For God's sake, Charlotte," and, "Let me entreat you, Lady G." "And let me, too, beseech you, madam," said Emily, with tears stealing down her cheeks.

"You are both very good: you are a sweet girl, Emily. I have a too playful heart. It will give me some pain and some pleasure; but, if I had not more pleasure than pain from my play, I should not be so silly."

My lord not coming in, and the dinner being ready, I ordered it to be served. "Won't you wait a little longer for Lord G.?"—"No. I hope he is safe and well. He is his own master as well as mine" (I sighed, I believe!) "and, no doubt, has a paramount pleasure in pursuing his own choice."

They raved. I begged that they would let us eat our dinner with comfort. My lord, I hoped, would come in with a keen appetite, and Nelthorpe should get a supper for him that he liked.

When we had dined, and retired into the adjoining drawing-room, I had another schooling-bout: Emily was even saucy. But I took it all, yet, in my heart, was vexed at Lord G.'s perverseness.

At last in came the honest man. He does not read this, and so cannot take exceptions, and I hope you will not at the word honest.

So lordly, so stiff, so solemn! Upon my word, had it not been Sunday I would have gone to my harpsichord directly. He bowed to Lord and Lady L. and to Emily very obligingly; to me he nodded. I nodded again; but, like a good-natured fool, smiled. He stalked to the chimney, turned his back towards it, buttoned up his mouth, held up his glowing face as if he were disposed to crow, yet had not won the battle; one hand in his bosom, the other under the skirt of his waistcoat, and his posture firmer than his mind. Yet was my heart so devoid of malice that I thought his attitude very genteel, and, had we not been man and wife, agreeable.

"We hoped to have found your lordship at home," said Lord L., "or we should not have dined here."

"If Lord G. is as polite a husband as a man," said I, "he will not thank your lordship for this compliment to his wife."

Lord G. swelled and reared himself up. His complexion, which was before in a glow, was heightened.

"Poor man!" thought I. But why should my tender heart pity obstinate people? Yet I could not help being dutiful. "Have you dined, my lord?" said I, with a sweet smile and very courteous.

He stalked to the window, and never a word answered he.

"Pray, Lady L., be so good as to ask my Lord G. if he has dined?" Was not this very condescending on such a behaviour?

Lady L. asked him, and as gently voiced as if she were asking the same question of her own lord. Lady L. is a kind-hearted soul, Harriet: she is my sister.

"I have not, madam," to Lady L., turning rudely from me, and not very civilly from her. "Ah!" thought I, "these men! The more they are courted—wretches! to find their consequence in a woman's meekness." Yet I could not forbear showing mine. Nature, Harriet. Who can resist constitution?

"What stiff airs are these!" approaching him. "I do

assure you, my lord, I shall not take this behaviour well," and put my hand on his arm.

I was served right. Would you believe it?—the man shook off my condescending hand by raising his elbow scornfully. He really did.

"Nay, then!" I left him, and retired to my former seat. I was vexed that it was Sunday: I wanted a little harmony.

Lord and Lady L. both blamed me by their looks; and my lady took my hand, and was leading me towards him. I showed a little reluctance, and—would you have thought it?—out of the drawing-room whipped my nimble lord, as if on purpose to avoid being moved by my concession.

I took my place again.

"I beg of you, Charlotte," said Lady L., "go to my lord. You have used him ill."

"When I think so, I will follow your advice, Lady L."

"And don't you think so, Lady G.?" said Lord L.

"What! for taking my own option how I would be dressed to-day! What! for deferring?" That moment in came my bluff lord. "Have I not," proceeded I, "been forced to dine without him to-day? Did he let me know what account I could give of his absence, or when he would return? And see, now, how angry he looks."

He traversed the room; I went on. "Did he not shake off my hand when I laid it, smiling, on his arm? Would he answer me a question which I kindly put to him, fearing he had not dined and might be sick for want of eating? Was I not forced to apply to Lady L. for an answer to my careful question, on his scornfully turning from me in silence? Might we not, if he had not gone out so abruptly—nobody knows where—have made the appearance his heart is so set upon? But now, indeed, it is too late."

"Oons, madam," said he, and he kemboed his arms and strutted up to me. "Now for a cuff," thought I. I was half afraid of it; but out of the room again capered he.

"Lord bless me!" said I. "What a passionate creature is this."

Lord and Lady L. both turned from me with indignation. But no wonder if one that they both did. They are a silly pair, and I believe have agreed to keep each other in countenance in all they do.

But Emily affected me. She sat before in one corner of the room weeping, and just then ran to me, and, wrapping her arms about me, "Dear, dear Lady G.," said she, "for Heaven's sake think of what our Miss Byron said—'Don't jest away your own happiness.' I don't say who is in fault; but, my dear lady, do you condescend. It looks pretty in a woman to condescend. Forgive me; I will run to my lord, and I will beg of him——"

Away she ran, without waiting for an answer, and bringing in the passionate wretch hanging on his arm—"You must not, my lord—indeed you must not be so passionate. Why, my lord, you frighted me—indeed you did. Such a word I never heard from your lordship's mouth——"

"Ay, my lord," said I, "you give yourself pretty airs. Don't you?—and use pretty words that a child shall be terrified at them. But come, come, ask my pardon for leaving me to dine without you."

Was not that tender? Yet out went Lord and Lady L. To be sure they did right, if they withdrew in hopes these kind words would have been received as reconciliatory ones, and not in displeasure with me, as I am half afraid they did; for their good-nature (worthy souls!) does sometimes lead them into misapprehensions. I kindly laid my hand on his arm again. He was ungracious. "Nay, my lord, don't once more reject me with disdain. If you do——" I then smiled most courteously. "Carry not your absurdities, my lord, too far;" and I took his hand. (There, Harriet, was condescension!) "I protest, sir, if you give yourself any more of these airs you will not find me so condescending.

Come, come, tell me you are sorry, and I will forgive you."

"Sorry, madam; sorry! I am indeed sorry for your provoking airs."

"Why, that's not ill said. But kemboed arms, my lord—are you not sorry for such an air? And, oons!—are you not sorry for such a word, and for such looks too, and for quarrelling with your dinner? I protest, my lord, you make one of us look like a child who flings away his bread and butter because it has not glass windows upon it."

"Not for one moment forbear, madam."

"Prithee, prithee" (I profess I had like to have said "Honest friend"), "no more of these airs—and, I tell you, I will forgive you."

"But, madam, I cannot, I will not——"

"Hush, hush—no more in that strain, and so loud as if we had lost each other in a wood. If you will let us be friends, say so—in an instant. If not, I am gone—gone this moment"—casting off from him, as I may say, intending to mount upstairs.

"Angel or demon shall I call you?" said he. "Yet I receive your hand as offered. But, for God's sake, madam, let us be happy!" And he kissed my hand, but not so cordially as it became him to do, and in came Lord and Lady L., with countenances a little ungracious.

I took my seat next my own man, with an air of officiousness, hoping to oblige him by it. He was obliged; and another day, not yet quite agreed upon, this parade is to be made.

And thus began, proceeded, and ended this doughty quarrel. And who knows but, before the day is absolutely resolved upon, we may have half-a-score more? Four, five, six days, as it may happen, is a great space of time for people to agree who are so much together, and one of whom is playful, and the other will not be played with. But these

kembo and oons airs, Harriet, stick a little in my stomach; and the man seems not to be quite come to neither. He is sullen and gloomy, and don't prate away as he used to do, when we have made up before.

But I will sing him a song to-morrow, I will please the honest man if I can. But he really should not have had for a wife a woman of so sweet a temper as yours,

CHARLOTTE G

LETTERS XXXVIII.–XLII. (Vol. iv.).—*These letters from Lady G., Mr. Lowther the surgeon, and Sir Charles take notice of the ruin through gambling of Everard Grandison, the cousin, and of the complete baffleement of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and his friends in their French adventure. They also give the narrative of Sir Charles's journey to Bologna, with the state of health of Jeronymo and of Clementina, whom, however, Sir Charles does not see in this volume.*

The Fifth Volume opens with the first interview of Sir Charles and Clementina, and its LETTERS I.–V., *which, like the closing letters of* Vol. iv., *are from Sir Charles to Dr. Bartlett, describe what follows. Clementina shows some symptoms of recovery in mind, as does her brother in body. Sir Charles maintains the position (of granting religious liberty to his wife, but refusing to surrender his own) which he had formerly held.*

LETTER VI [V]

MISS BYRON TO LADY G.

Thursday, May 11.

I WRITE on purpose to acquaint you that I have had a visit from Lady Olivia. She dined with us, and is just set out for Northampton. We all joined in the most cordial manner to entreat her to favour us with her company till morning, but she was not to be prevailed upon. Every one of us equally admires and pities her. Indeed, she is a finer woman than you, Lady G., would allow her to be in the debate between us in town on that subject.

After dinner she desired a quarter of an hour's discourse with me alone. We retired into the cedar parlour.

She opened, as she said, her whole heart to me. What an hatred has she to the noble Lady Clementina! She sometimes frighted me by her threatenings. Poor, unwomanly lady!

I took the liberty to blame her. I told her she must excuse me: it was ever my way with those I respected.

She would fain have got me to own that I loved Sir

Charles Grandison. I acknowledged gratitude and esteem. But as there are no prospects ("hopes" I had like to have said), I would go no further. But she was sure it was so. I did say, and I am in earnest, that I never could be satisfied with a divided heart. She clasped me in her arms upon this.

She told me that she admired him for his virtue. She knew he had resisted the greatest temptations that ever man was tried with. I hope, poor woman, that none of them were from her. For her own sake (notwithstanding what Dr. Bartlett once whispered, and good man as he is) I hope so. The chevalier, she said, was superior to all attempts that were not grounded on honour and conscience. She had heard of women who had spread their snares for him in his early youth, but women in her country, of slight fame, she said, had no way to come at him, and women of virtue were secure from his attempts. "Yet, would you not have thought," asked she, "that beauty might have marked him for its own? Such an air, such an address, so much personal bravery, accustomed to shine in the upper life: all that a woman can value in a man is the Chevalier Grandison!"

She at last declared that she wished him to be mine, rather than any woman's on earth.

I was very frank, very unreserved. She seemed delighted with me, and went away, professing to every one, as well as to me, that she admired me for my behaviour, my sincerity, my prudence (she was pleased to say), and my artlessness, above all the women she had ever conversed with.

May her future conduct be such as may do credit to her birth, to her high fortune, to her sex!

In answer to your kind inquiries about my health, I only say what must be will—sometimes better than at others. If I could hear you were good, I should be better, I believe. Adieu, my dear Lady G. Adieu.

LETTERS VII.–XIII. (Vol. v.) *are from various persons, and deal with a good many different subjects—the conjugal squabbles of Lord and Lady G. (in one of which she provokes him into breaking her harpsichord), and a visit of the pair, after reconciliation, to Miss Byron at Selby House.*

LETTER XIV [v]

LADY G. TO LADY L.

SELBY HOUSE, *Monday, July* 24.[1]

LORD bless me, my dear, what shall we do! My brother, in all probability, may by this time—but I cannot tell how to suppose it. Ah! the poor Harriet. The three letters from my brother, which, by the permission of Dr. Bartlett, I enclose, will show you that the Italian affair is now at a crisis.

Read them in this place, and return them sealed up and directed to the doctor.

LETTER XV [v]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON TO DR. BARTLETT

FLORENCE, *Wednesday, July* 5–16.

THREE weeks have now passed since the date of my last letter to my paternal friend; nor has it in the main been

[1] Several letters written in the space between the last date, June 16, and the present, which give an account of their diversions, visits, entertainments at Selby House, Shirley Manor, &c., are omitted.

a disagreeable space of time, since within it I have had the pleasure of hearing from you and other of my friends in England, from those at Paris, and good news from Bologna, wherever I moved, as well from the bishop and Father Marescotti as from Mr. Lowther.

The bishop particularly tells me that they ascribe to the amendment of the brother the hopes they now have of the sister's recovery.

I passed near a fortnight of this time at Naples and Portici. The general and his lady, who is one of the best of women, made it equally their study to oblige and amuse me.

The general, on my first arrival at Naples, entered into talk with me on my expectations with regard to his sister. I answered him as I had done his mother, and he was satisfied with what I said.

When we parted, he embraced me as his brother and friend, and apologised for the animosity he once had to me. If it pleased God to restore his sister, no more from him, he said, should her mind be endangered; but her choice should determine him. His lady declared her esteem for me without reserve, and said "that next to the recovery of Clementina and Jeronymo, her wish was to be entitled to call me brother."

What, my dear Dr. Bartlett, is at last to be my destiny? The greatest opposer of the alliance once in view is overcome; but the bishop, you will observe by what I have told you, ascribes to another cause the merit which the general gives me, with a view possibly to abate my expectation. Be the event as it may, I will go on in the course I am in and leave to Providence the issue.

Mrs. Beaumont returned from Bologna but yesterday.

She confirms the favourable account I had before received of the great alteration for the better that there is in the health both of brother and sister, and because of that in the whole family. Mr. Lowther, she says, is as highly, as deservedly caressed by every one. Jeronymo is able to sit up two hours

in a day. He has tried his pen, and finds it will be again in his power to give his friends pleasure with it.

Mrs. Beaumont tells me that Clementina generally twice a day visits her beloved Jeronymo. She has taken once more to her needle, and often sits and works in her brother's room. This amuses her and delights him.

She converses generally without much rambling, and seems to be very soon sensible of her misfortune when she begins to talk incoherently; for at such times she immediately stops, not seldom sheds a tear, and either withdraws to her own closet or is silent.

She several times directed her discourse to Mr. Lowther when she met him in her brother's chamber. She observed great delicacy when she spoke of me to him, and dwelt not on the subject; but was very inquisitive about England, and the customs and manners of the people, particularly of the women.

Everybody has made it a rule (Jeronymo among the rest, and to which also Camilla strictly conforms) never to lead her to talk of me. She, however, asks often after me, and numbers the days of my absence.

At one time, seeking Mrs. Beaumont in her dressing-room, she thus accosted her: "I come, madam, to ask you why everybody forbears to mention the Chevalier Grandison; and when I do, talks of somebody or something else. Camilla is as perverse in this way as anybody; nay, Jeronymo (I have tried him several times) does the very same. Can Jeronymo be ungrateful? Can Jeronymo be indifferent to his friend who has done so much for him? I hope I am not looked upon as a silly, or as a forward creature, that am not to be trusted with hearing the name of the man mentioned for whom I profess a high esteem and gratitude. Tell me, madam, have I at any time in my unhappy hours behaved or spoken aught unworthy of my character, of my family, of the modesty of woman? If I have, my heart renounces the guilt; I must,

At one time, seeking Mrs. Beaumont in her dressing-room, she thus accosted her.

indeed, have been unhappy; I could not be Clementina della Porretta."

Mrs. Beaumont set her heart at ease on this subject.

"Well," said she, "it shall be seen, I hope so, that true modesty and high gratitude may properly have a place together in this heart," putting her hand to her bosom. "Let me but own that I esteem him, for I really do; and I hope my sincerity shall never mislead or betray me into indecorum. And now, madam, let us talk of him for one quarter of an hour, and no more. Here is my watch—it is an English watch; nobody knows that I bought it for that very reason. Don't you tell." She then, suspecting her head, dropped a tear, and withdrew in silence.

Mrs. Beaumont, my dear friend, knows the true state of my heart, and she pities me. She wishes that the lady's reason may be established; she is afraid it should be risked by opposition, but there is a man whom she wishes to be Clementina's. There is a woman—but—do Thou, Providence, direct us both! All that Thou orderest must be best.

Mrs. Beaumont thinks Lady Clementina is at times too solemn, and is the more apprehensive when she is so, as there is a greatness in her solemnity which she is afraid will be too much for her. She has often her silent fits, in which she is regardless of what anybody but her mother says to her.

As she grows better, the fervour of her devotion, which in her highest delirium never went quite off, increases. Nor do they discourage, but indulge her in it, because in her it seems, by the cheerfulness with which her ardent zeal is attended, to be owing to true piety, which they justly observe seldom makes a good mind sour, morose, or melancholy.

Mrs. Beaumont says that for two days before she came away she had shown on several occasions that she began to expect my return. She broke silence in one of her dumb fits—"Twenty days, did he say, Camilla?" and was silent again.

The day before Mrs. Beaumont set out, as she, the young lady, and marchioness were sitting at work together, Camilla entered with unusual precipitation, with a message from the bishop, desiring leave to attend them; and the marchioness saying, "By all means, pray let him come in," the young lady, on hearing him approach, laid down her work, changed colour, and stood up with an air of dignity; but, on the bishop's entrance, sat down with a look of dissatisfaction, as if disappointed.

Adieu, my dear friend! I shall reach Bologna, I hope, to-morrow night. You will soon have another letter from your truly affectionate

GRANDISON.

LETTER XVI [v]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

BOLOGNA, *July* 7–18.

IT was late last night before I arrived at this place. I sent my compliments to the family. In the morning I went to their palace, and was immediately conducted to the chamber of Signor Jeronymo. He was disposing himself to rise, that he might receive me up, in order to rejoice me on his ability to do so. I sat down by him and received the overflowings of his grateful heart. Everybody, he told me, was amended, both in health and spirits.

Camilla came in soon after, congratulating me on my arrival in the name of her young lady. She let me know that in less than a quarter of an hour she would be ready to receive my visit.

"Oh, sir," said the good woman, "miracles! miracles! We are all joy and hope!"

At going out she whispered as she passed (I was then at the window), "My young lady is dressing in colours to receive you. She will no more appear to you, she says, in black. Now, sir, will you soon reap the reward of all your goodness, for the general has signified to my lord his entire acquiescence with his sister's choice and their determination."

The bishop came in. "Chevalier," said he, "you are welcome, thrice welcome to Bologna. You have subdued us all. Clementina commands her own destiny. The man whom she chooses to call hers, be he who he will, will have a treasure in her in every sense of the word."

The marquis, the count, Father Marescotti, all severally made me the highest compliments. The count particularly, taking my hand, said, "From us, chevalier, nothing will be wanting to make you happy; from you, there can be but one thing wanting to make us so."

The marchioness entering, saved me any other return than by bowing to each. Before I could speak to her, "Welcome, chevalier," said she; "but you are not come before you were wished for. You will find we have kept a more exact account of the days of your absence than we did before. I hope her joy to see you will not be too much for her. Clementina ever had a grateful heart."

"The chevalier's prudence," said Father Marescotti, "may be confided in. He knows how to moderate his own joy on his first address to her, on seeing her so greatly amended; and then Lady Clementina's natural delicacy will not have an example to carry her joy above her reason."

"The chevalier, madam," said the bishop, smiling, "will, at this rate, be too secure. We leave him not room for professions; but he cannot be ungenerous."

"The Chevalier Grandison," said the kind Jeronymo, "speaks by action: it is his way. His head, his heart, his lips, his hands are governed by one motion and directed by

one spring. When he leaves no room for doubt, professions would depreciate his service."

He then ascribed an extraordinary merit to me, on my leaving my native country and friends, to attend them in person.

We may perhaps, my reverend friend, be allowed to repeat the commendations given us by grateful and benevolent spirits when we cannot otherwise so well do justice to the generous warmth of their friendship. The noble Jeronymo, I am confident, were he in my place and I in his, would put a more moderate value on the like services, done by himself. What is friendship if, on the like calls, and blessed with power, it is not ready to exert itself in action?

"Grandison," replied the bishop, "were he one of us, might expect canonisation. In a better religion, we have but few young men of quality and fortune so good as he; though I think none so bad as many of the pretended reformed, who travel as if to copy our vices, and not to imitate our virtues."

I was overwhelmed with gratitude on a reception so very generous and unreserved. Camilla came in seasonably with a message from the young lady, inviting my attendance on her in her dressing-room.

The marchioness withdrew just before. I followed Camilla. She told me as we went that she thought her not quite so sedate as she had been for some days past, which she supposed owing to her hurrying in dressing and to her expectation of me.

The mother and daughter were together. They were talking when I entered. "Dear, fanciful girl," I heard the mother say, disposing otherwise some flowers that she had in her bosom.

Clementina, when her mind was sound, used to be all unaffected elegance. I never saw but one woman who equalled her in that respect. Miss Byron seems conscious that she

may trust to her native charms, yet betrays no pride in her consciousness. Who ever spoke of her jewels that beheld her face? For mingled dignity, and freedom of air and manner, these two ladies excel amongst women.

Clementina appeared exceedingly lovely; but her fancifulness in the disposition of her ornaments, and the unusual lustre of her eyes, which every one was wont to admire for their serene brightness, showed an imagination more disordered than I hoped to see, and gave me pain at my entrance.

"The chevalier, my love," said the marchioness, turning round to me. "Clementina, receive your friend."

She stood up, dignity and sweetness in her air. I approached her; she refused not her hand. "The general, madam, and his lady salute you by me."

"They received you, I am sure, as the friend of our family. But tell me, sir," smiling, "have you not exceeded your promised time?"

"Two or three days only."

"Only, sir! Well, I upbraid you not. No wonder that a man so greatly valued cannot always keep his time."

She hesitated, looked at her mother, at me, and on the floor, visibly at a loss. Then, as sensible of her wandering, turned aside her head, and took out her handkerchief.

"Mrs. Beaumont, madam," said I, to divert her chagrin, "sends you her compliments."

"Were you at Florence? Mrs. Beaumont, said you? Were you at Florence?" Then, running to her mother, she threw her arms about her neck, hiding her face in her bosom. "Oh, madam, conceal me, conceal me from myself. I am not well."

"Be comforted, my best love," wrapping her maternal arms about her and kissing her forehead; "you will be better presently."

I made a motion to withdraw. The marchioness by her head approving, I went into the next apartment.

She soon inquired for me, and, on notice from Camilla, I returned.

She sat with her head leaning on her mother's shoulder. She raised it. "Excuse me, sir," said she. "I cannot be well, I see. But no matter. I am better, and I am worse than I was: worse because I am sensible of my calamity."

Her eyes had then lost all that lustre which had shown a too raised imagination; but they were as much in the other extreme—overclouded with mistiness, dimness, vapours, swimming in tears.

I took her hand. "Be not disheartened, madam. You will be soon well. These are usual turns of the malady you seem to be so sensible of, when it is changing to perfect health."

"God grant it! Oh, chevalier, what trouble have I given my friends, my mamma here—you, sir—everybody! Oh, that naughty Laurana! But for her! But tell me—is she dead? Poor, cruel creature! Is she no more?"

"Would you have her to be no more, my love?" said her mother.

"Oh, no, no; I would have had her to live and to repent. Was she not the companion of my childhood? She loved me once; I always loved her. Say, chevalier, is she living?"

I looked at the marchioness, as asking if I should tell her she was, and receiving her approving nod. "She is living, madam," answered I, "and I hope will repent."

"Is she, is she indeed, my mamma?" interrupted she.

"She is, my dear."

"Thank God!" rising from her seat, clasping her hands, and standing more erect than usual. "Then have I a triumph to come," said the noble creature. "Excuse my pride. I will show her that I can forgive her. But I will talk of her when I am better. You say, sir, I shall be better. You say that my malady is changing. What comfort you give me!"

Then dropping down against her mother's chair, on her

knees, her eyes and hands lifted up, "Great and good God Almighty, heal, heal, I beseech Thee, my wounded mind, that I may be enabled to restore to the most indulgent of parents the happiness I have robbed them of. Join your prayers with mine, sir. You are a good man—but you, madam, are a Catholic. The chevalier is not. Do you pray for me. I shall be restored to your prayers. And may I be restored, as I shall never more do anything wilfully to offend or disturb your tender heart."

"God restore my child!" sobbed the indulgent parent, raising her.

Camilla had not withdrawn. She stood weeping in a corner of the room. "Camilla," said the young lady, advancing towards her, "lend me your arm. I will return to you again, sir; don't go. Excuse me, madam, for a few moments. I find," putting her hand to her forehead, "I am not quite well. I will return presently."

The marchioness and I were extremely affected by her great behaviour; but, though we were grieved for the pain her sensibility gave her, yet we could not but console and congratulate ourselves upon it, as affording hopes of her perfect recovery.

She returned soon, attended by Camilla, who, having been soothing her, appealed to me whether I did not think she would soon be quite well.

I answered that I had no doubt of it.

"Look you there now, my dear lady."

"I thought you said so, chevalier; but I was not sure. God grant it! My affliction is great, my mamma. I must have been a wicked creature. Pray for me."

Her mother comforted her, praised her, and raised her dejected heart. And then Clementina, looking down, a blush overspreading her face, and standing motionless, as if considering of something—"What is in my child's thoughts?" said the marchioness, taking her hand. "What is my love thinking of?"

"Why, madam," in a low but audible voice, "I should be glad to talk with the chevalier alone, methinks. He is a good man. But if you think I ought not, I will not desire it. In everything I will be governed by you; yet I am ashamed. What can I have to say that my mother may not hear? Nothing, nothing. Your Clementina's heart, madam, is a part of yours."

"My love shall be indulged in everything. You and I, Camilla, will retire." Clementina was silent, and both withdrew.

She commanded me to sit down by her. I obeyed. It was not, in the situation I was in, for me to speak first. I attended her pleasure in silence.

She seemed at a loss. She looked round her, then at me, then on the floor. I could not then forbear speaking.

"The mind of Lady Clementina," said I, "seems to have something upon it that she wishes to communicate. You have not, madam, a more sincere, a more faithful friend than the man before you. Your happiness and that of my Jeronymo engross all my cares. Honour me with your confidence."

"I had something to say; I had many questions to ask. But pity me, sir; my memory is gone: I have lost it all. But this I know, that we are all under obligations to you which we never can return, and I am uneasy under the sense of them."

"What, madam, have I done but answered to the call of friendship, which, in the like situation, not any one of your family but would have obeyed?"

"This generous way of thinking adds to the obligation. Say but, sir, in what way we can express our gratitude—in what way I, in particular, can—and I shall be easy. Till we have done it, I never shall."

"And can you, madam, think that I am not highly rewarded in the prospect of that success which opens to all our wishes?"

"It may be so in your opinion; but this leaves the debt still heavier upon us."

How could I avoid construing the hint in my favour?

She seemed at a loss.

And yet I did not think the lady, even had she not had

parents in being, had she been absolutely independent, well enough to determine for herself in a situation so delicate. How, then, could I in honour (all her friends expecting that I should be entirely governed by her motions, as they were resolved to be) take direct advantage of the gratitude which at that instant possessed her noble mind?

"If, madam," answered I, "you will suppose yourselves under obligations to me, and will not be easy till you have acknowledged them, the return must be a family act. Let me refer myself to your father, mother, brothers, and to yourself: what you and they determine upon must be right."

After a short silence—"Well, sir, I believe you have put the matter upon a right footing; but here is my difficulty: you cannot be rewarded. I cannot reward you. But, sir, the subject begins to be too much for me. I have high notions—my duty to God and to my parents, my gratitude to you. But I have begun to write down all that has occurred to me on this important subject. I wish to act greatly. You, sir, have set me the example; I will continue to write down my thoughts; I cannot trust to my memory, no, nor yet to my heart! But no more on a subject that is at present too affecting to me. I will talk to my mother upon it first, but not just now, though I will ask for the honour of her presence."

She then went from me into the next room, and instantly returned, leading in the marchioness. "Don't, dear madam, be angry with me. I had many things to say to the chevalier which I thought I could best say when I was alone with him; but I forget what they were. Indeed, I ought not to remember them, if they were such as I could not say before my mother."

"My child cannot do anything that can make me displeased with her. The chevalier's generosity, and my Clementina's goodness of heart, can neither of them be doubted."

"Oh, madam, what a deep sense have I of yours and of my father's indulgence to me! How shall I requite it! How unworthy should I be of that returning reason, which sometimes seems to enliven my hope, if I were not to resolve that it shall be wholly employed in my duty to God and to you both! But even then my gratitude to that generous man will leave a burden upon my heart that never can be removed."

She withdrew with precipitation, leaving the marchioness and me in silence, looking upon each other and admiring her. Camilla followed her, and instantly returning—"My dear young lady—don't be frightened, madam—is not well. She seems to have exhausted her spirits by talking."

The marchioness hastened in with Camilla; and while I was hesitating whether to withdraw to Jeronymo or to quit the palace, Camilla came to me. "My young lady asks for you, sir."

I followed her to her closet. She was in her mother's arms on a couch, just come out of a fit, but not a strong one. She held out her hand to me. I pressed it with my lips. I was affected with her nobleness of mind and weakness of spirit. "Oh, chevalier," said she, "how unworthy am I of that tenderness which you express for me! Oh that I could be grateful. But God will reward you. He only can."

She desired her mother and me to leave her to her Camilla. We both withdrew.

"What can be done with this dear creature, chevalier? She is going to be bad again. Oh, sir, her behaviour is now different from what it ever was."

"She seems, madam, to have something on her mind that she has a difficulty to reveal. When she has revealed it she will be easier. You will prevail upon her, madam, by your condescending goodness, to communicate it to you. Allow me to withdraw to Signor Jeronymo. Lady Clementina, when she is a little recovered, will acquaint you with what passed between her and me."

"I heard it all," replied she, "and you are the most honourable of men. What man would, what man could have acted as you acted with regard to her, with regard to us, yet not slight the dear creature's manifest meaning, but refer it to us and to her, to make it a family act? A family act it must, it shall be. Only, sir, let me be assured that my child's malady will not lessen your love for her; and permit her to be a Catholic! These are all the terms I, for my part, have to make with you. The rest of us still wish that you would be so, though but in appearance, for the sake of our alliances. But I will not expect an answer to the last. As to the first, you cannot be ungenerous to one who has suffered so much for her love of you."

The marquis and the bishop entering the room, "I leave it to you, madam," said I, "to acquaint their lordships with what has passed. I will attend Signor Jeronymo for a few moments."

I went accordingly to his chamber; but being told that he was disposed to rest, I withdrew with Mr. Lowther into his; and there Camilla coming to me, Mr. Lowther retiring, she told me that her young lady was pretty well recovered. It was evident to her, she said, that she never would be well till the marriage was solemnised. "They are all," said she, "in close conference together, I believe upon that subject. My young lady is endeavouring to compose herself in her closet. The marchioness hopes you will stay and dine here."

I excused myself from dining, and desired her to tell her lady that I would attend them in the evening.

I am now preparing to do so.

LETTER XVII [v]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

BOLOGNA, *July* 7–18.

Now, my dear friend, are matters here drawing to a crisis. I was conducted, as soon as I entered this palace, to the presence of the marquis and marchioness. The marquis arose and took my hand, with great but solemn kindness, and led me to a chair placed between theirs. The bishop, the count, and Father Marescotti entered, and took their places.

"My dear," said the marquis, referring to his lady.

After some little hesitation, "We have no hope, sir," said she, "of our child's perfect restoration, but from——" She stopped.

"Our compliance with every wish of her heart," said the bishop.

"Ay, do you proceed," said the marchioness to the prelate.

"It would be to no purpose, chevalier," questioned the bishop, "to urge to you the topic so near to all our hearts?"

I bowed my assent to what he said.

"I am sorry for it," replied the bishop.

"I am very sorry for it," said the count.

"What security can we ask of you, sir," said the marquis, "that our child shall not be perverted? Oh, chevalier, it is a hard, hard trial."

"Father Marescotti," answered I, "shall prescribe the terms."

"I cannot, in conscience," said the father, "consent to this marriage; yet the merits of the Chevalier Grandison have taken from me the power of opposing it. Permit me to be silent."

"Father Marescotti and I," said the bishop, "are in one

situation as to scruples of conscience. But I will forget the prelate for the brother. Dear Grandison, will you permit us to say to inquirers that we look upon you as one of our Church, and that prudential reasons, with regard to your country and friends in it, deter you at present from declaring yourself?"

"Let not terms be proposed, my good lord, that would lessen your opinion of me should I comply with them. If I am to be honoured with an admission into this noble family, let me not in my own eyes appear unworthy of the honour. Were I to find myself capable of prevaricating in an article so important as religion, no one could hate me so much as I should hate myself, were even an imperial diadem with your Clementina, the noblest of women, to be the consideration."

"You have the example of great princes, chevalier," said Father Marescotti—"Henry the Fourth of France, Augustus of Poland——"

"True, father. But great princes are not always, and in every action of their lives, great men. They might make the less scruple of changing their religion, as they were neither of them strict in the practice of it. They who can allow themselves in some deviations may in others. I boast not of my own virtue; but it has been my aim to be uniform. I am too well satisfied with my own religion to doubt; if I were not, it would be impossible but I must be influenced by the wishes of friends so dear to me, whose motives are the result of their own piety, and of the regard they have for my everlasting welfare."

"The chevalier and I," rejoined the bishop, "have carried this argument to its full extent before. My honoured lord's question recurs, 'What security can we have that my sister shall not be perverted?' The chevalier refers to Father Marescotti to propose it. The father excuses himself. I, as the brother of Clementina, ask you, chevalier, Will you promise

never by yourself, or your English divines, to attempt to pervert her? A confessor you have allowed her. Shall Father Marescotti be the man?"

"And will Father Marescotti——"

"I will, for the sake of preserving to Lady Clementina her faith, that faith by which only she can be saved, and perhaps in hope of converting the man who then will be dear to the whole family."

"I not only comply with the proposal, but shall think Father Marescotti will do me a favour in putting it into my power to show him the regard I have for him. One request I have only to make, that Father Marescotti will prescribe his own conditions to me. And I assure you all that they shall be exceeded, as to the consideration, be they ever so high."

"You and I, chevalier," replied the father, "shall have no difficulty as to the terms."

"None you can have," said the marquis, "as to those. Father Marescotti will be still our spiritual director."

"Only one condition I will beg leave to make with Father Marescotti, that he will confine his pious cares to those only who are already of his own persuasion, and that no disputable points may ever be touched upon to servants, tenants, or neighbours, in a country where a different religion from that to which he is a credit is established. I might perhaps have safely left this to his own moderation and honour, yet, without such a previous engagement, his conscience might have been embarrassed; and had I not insisted on it, I should have behaved towards my country in a manner for which I could not answer to my own heart."

"Your countrymen, chevalier," said the count, "complain loudly of persecution from our Church; yet what disqualifications do Catholics lie under in England!"

"A great deal, my lord, may be said on this subject. I think it sufficient to answer for myself and my own conduct."

"As to our child's servants," said the marchioness, "methinks I should hope that Father Marescotti might have a small congregation about him, to keep their lady in countenance, in a country where her religion will subject her to inconveniences, perhaps to more than inconveniences."

"Her woman, and those servants," replied I, "who will immediately attend her person, shall always be chosen by herself. If they behave well, I will consider them as my servants for their benefit. If they misbehave, I must be allowed to consider them also as my servants as well as their lady's. I must not be subject to the dominion of servants —the most intolerable of all dominion. Were they to know that they are independent of me, I should be disobeyed, perhaps insulted; and my resentment of their insolence would be thought a persecution on account of their religion."

This article bore some canvassing. "If Camilla," at last I said, "were the woman, on her discretion I should have great dependence."

"And on Father Marescotti's you also may, chevalier," said the bishop. "I should hope that when my sister and you are in England together you would not scruple to consult him on the misbehaviour of any of my sister's Catholic servants."

"Indeed, my lord, I would. I will myself be judge in my own house of the conduct and behaviour of all my servants. From the independence of such people upon me disputes or uneasinesses might arise that otherwise would never happen between their lady and me. The power of dismission on any flagrant misbehaviour must be in me. My temper is not capricious; my charity is not confined; my consideration for people in a foreign country, and wholly in my power, will, I hope, be even generous. I perhaps may bear with them the more for having them in my power. But my wife's servants, were she a sovereign, must be mine."

"Unhappy," said Father Marescotti, "that you cannot be

of one faith. But, sir, you will allow, I hope, if the case will bear it, of expostulation from me?"

"Yes, father; and should generally, I believe, be determined by your advice and mediation; but I would not condition to make the greatest saint and the wisest man on earth a judge in my own family over me."

"There is reason in this," rejoined the bishop. "You perhaps would not scruple, sir, to consult the marchioness before you dismissed such a considerable servant as a woman, if my sister did not agree to it?"

"The marquis and marchioness will be judges of my conduct when I am in Italy. I should despise myself were it not to be the same in England as at Bologna. I have in my travels been attended by Catholic servants. They never had reason to complain of want of kindness, even to indulgence, from me. We Protestants confine not salvation within the pale of our own Church; Catholics do, and have therefore an argument for their zeal in endeavouring to make proselytes that we have not. Hence, generally speaking, may a Catholic servant live more happily with a Protestant master than a Protestant servant with a Catholic master. Let my servants live but up to their own professions, and they shall be indulged with all reasonable opportunities of pursuing the dictates of their own consciences. A truly religious servant, of whatever persuasion, cannot be a bad one."

"Well, as to this article, we must leave it," acquiesced the bishop, "to occasions as they may arise. Nine months in the year, I think, you propose to reside in Italy."

"That, my lord, was on a supposition that Lady Clementina would not oblige me with her company to my native country any part of the year. In that case I proposed to pass but three months in every year in England, otherwise I hoped that year and year in turn would be allowed me."

"We can have no wish to separate man and wife," said the marquis. "Clementina will, no doubt, accompany her

husband. We will stipulate only for year and year; but let ours be the first year; and we cannot doubt but the dear child will meet with all reasonable indulgence for the sake of her tender health."

"Not one request that you, my lord, and you, madam, shall think reasonable shall be denied to the dear lady."

"Let me propose one thing, chevalier," said the marchioness, "that in the first year, which is to be ours, you endeavour to prevail upon your sisters—amiable women, as we have heard they are—to come over and be of our acquaintance—your ward also, who may be looked upon as a little Italian. You love your sisters, and I should be glad (so would Clementina, I make no doubt) to be familiarised to the ladies of your family before she goes to England."

"My sisters, madam, are the most obliging of women, as their lords are of men. I have no doubt of prevailing upon them to attend you and Lady Clementina here. And as it will give them time to prepare for the visit, I believe, if it be made in the latter part of the first year, it will be most acceptable to them and to you, since then they will not only have commenced a friendship with Lady Clementina and obtained the honour of your good opinion, but will attend her in her voyage to England."

They all approved of this. I added that I hoped, when the second year arrived, I should have the honour of finding in the party some of this noble family, which could not fail of giving delight as well as affiance to the tender heart of their beloved Clementina.

"My lord and I," said the marchioness, "will probably, if well, be of the party. We shall not know how to part with a child so dear to us. But these seas——"

"Well, well," said the bishop, "this is a contingence, and must be left to time, and to the chevalier and my sister when they are one. As his is the strongest mind, it will in all

reasonable matters yield to the weaker. Now, as to my sister's fortune——"

"It is a large one," said the count. "We shall all take pleasure in adding to it."

"Should there be more sons than one by the marriage," rejoined the bishop, "as the estate of her two grandfathers will be an ample provision for one of them, and your English estate for another, I hope we may expect that the education of one of them may be left to us."

Every one said this was a very reasonable expectation.

"I cannot condition for this, my lord. The education of the sons was to be left to me, that of the daughters to the mother. I will consent that the Italian estate shall be tied up for daughters' portions, and that they shall be brought up under your own eyes, Italians. The sons shall have no benefit by the Italian estate."

"Except they become Catholics, chevalier," added the bishop.

"No, my lord," replied I: "that might be a temptation. Though I would leave posterity as free as I myself am left in the article of religion, yet would I not lay any snares for them. I am for having them absolutely secluded from any possibility of enjoying that estate, as they will be Englishmen. Cannot this be done by the laws of your country, and the tenure by which these estates are held?"

"If Clementina marry," said the marquis, "whether there be issue or not, Laurana's claim ceases. But, chevalier, can you think it just to deprive children unborn of their natural right?"

"I have a very good estate; it is improving. I have considerable expectations besides. That is not mine which I do not possess, and shall have no right to but by marriage, and which, therefore, must and ought to be subject to marriage articles. Riches never made men happy. If my descendants will not be so with a competence, they will not with a

redundance. I hope Signor Jeronymo may recover and marry. Let the estate here, from the hour that I shall be honoured with the hand of your dear Clementina, be Jeronymo's and his posterity's for ever. If it shall be thought proper for him, on taking possession, to make his sister any brotherly acknowledgment, it shall be to her sole and separate use, and not subject to any control of mine. If Signor Jeronymo marry not, or if he do and die without issue, let the estate in question be the general's. He and his lady deserve everything. The estate shall not, by my consent, go out of the name."

They looked upon each other. "Brother," said the count, "I see not but we may leave everything to the generosity of such a young man as this. He quite overcomes me."

"A disinterested and generous man," rejoined the bishop, "is born a ruler, and he is at the same time the greatest of politicians were policy only to be considered."

"The most equitable medium, I think," resumed the marchioness, "is what the chevalier hinted at, and most answerable to the intention of the dear child's grandfathers; it is that the estate in question be secured to the daughters of the marriage. Our sons will be greatly provided for, and it will be rewarding in some measure the chevalier for his generosity that the sons of the marriage shall not have their patrimony lessened by the provision to be made for daughters."

They all generously applauded the marchioness, and proposing this expedient to me, I bowed my grateful assent. "See, chevalier," said Father Marescotti, "what a generous family you are likely to be allied with! Oh that you could be subdued by a goodness so much like your own, and declare yourself a Catholic! His Holiness himself (my lord the bishop could engage) would receive you with blessings at the footstool of his throne. You allow, sir, that salvation may be obtained in our Church; out of it we think it cannot.

Rejoice us all. Rejoice Lady Clementina, and let us know no bound in our joy."

"What opinion, my dear Father Marescotti, would you all have of the man who could give up his conscience, though for the highest consideration on earth? Did you, could you think the better of the two princes mentioned to me for the change of their religion? One of them was assassinated in the streets of his metropolis by an ecclesiastic who questioned the sincerity of his change. Could the matter be of indifference to me? But, my dear Father Marescotti, let us leave this to be debated hereafter between you and me, as father and son. Your piety shall command my reverence. But pain not my heart by putting me on denial of anything that shall be asked of me by such respectable and generous persons as those I am before, and when we are talking on a subject so delicate and so important."

"Father Marescotti, we must give up this point," said the bishop. "The chevalier and I have discussed it heretofore. He is a determined man. If you hereafter can gain upon him, you will make us all happy. But now, my lord," to the marquis, "let the chevalier know what he will have with my sister, besides the bequests of her grandfathers, from your bounty—and from yours, madam," to his mother, "as a daughter of your house."

"I beg, my lord, one word," said I to the marquis, "before you speak. Let not a syllable of this be mentioned to me now. Whatever you shall be pleased to do of this nature, let it be done annually, as my behaviour to your daughter may deserve. Do I not know the generosity of every one of this noble family? Let me be in your power. I have enough for her and for me, or I do not know the noble Clementina. Whatever you do, for the sake of your own magnificence that do, but let us leave particulars unmentioned."

"What would Lady Sforza say were she present?" rejoined

the count. "Averse as she is to the alliance, she would admire the man."

"Are you earnest in your request, chevalier," asked the bishop, "that particulars shall not be mentioned?"

"I beg they may not. I earnestly beg it."

"Pray let the chevalier be obliged," returned the prelate. "Sir," said he, and snatched my hand, "brother, friend, what shall I call you? We will oblige you, but not in doubt of your kind treatment of Clementina. She must, she will deserve it; but that we may have it in our power to be revenged of you. Sir, we will take great revenge of you. And now let us rejoice Jeronymo's heart with an account of all that has passed. We might have held this conference before him. All that is further necessary to be said may be said in his presence."

"Who," said Father Marescotti, "can hold out against the Chevalier Grandison? I will tell every one who shall question me on this alliance, zealous Catholics with a Protestant so determined, what a man he is, and then they will allow of this one particular exception to a general rule."

"All we have now to do," said the marquis, "is to gain his Holiness's permission. That has not been refused in such cases, where either the sons or daughters of the marriage are to be brought up Catholics."

The count then took the marchioness's hand, and we all entered Jeronymo's chamber together.

I stepped into Mr. Lowther's apartment while they related to him all that had passed. He was impatient to see me. The bishop led me in to him. He embraced me as his brother. "Now, my dear Grandison," said he, "I am indeed happy. This is the point to which I have long directed all my wishes. God grant that our dear Clementina's malady may be no drawback upon your felicities, and you must both then be happy."

I was sensible of a little abatement, on the bishop's saying

to his mother, not knowing I heard him, "Ah, madam, the poor Count of Belvedere—how will he be affected! But he will go to Madrid, and I hope make himself happy there with some Spanish lady."

"The poor Count of Belvedere," returned the marchioness, with a sigh — "but he will not know how to blame us——"

To-morrow morning I am to drink chocolate with Lady Clementina. We shall be left together perhaps, or only with her mother or Camilla.

What, my dear Dr. Bartlett, would I give to be assured that the most excellent of Englishwomen could think herself happy with the Earl of D., the only man of all her admirers who is in any manner worthy of calling so bright a jewel his? Should Miss Byron be unhappy, and through my means, the remembrance of my own caution and self-restraint could not appease the grief of my heart.

But so prudent a woman as she is, and as the Countess of D. is. What are these suggestions of tenderness?—are they not suggestions of vanity and presumption? They are. They must be so. I will banish them from my thoughts, as such. Ever-amiable Miss Byron, friend of my soul, forgive me for them! Yet if the noble Clementina is to be mine, my heart will be greatly gratified if, before she receive my vows, I could know that Miss Byron had given her hand, in compliance with the entreaties of all her friends, to the deserving Earl of D.

Having an opportunity, I despatch this and my two former. In you I include remembrances to all my beloved friends. Adieu, my dear Dr. Bartlett. "In the highest of our pleasures, the sighing heart will remind us of imperfection." It is fit it should be so. Adieu, my dear friend!

CHARLES GRANDISON.

CONTINUATION OF LADY G.'S LETTER TO LADY L.

NO. XIV.

(*Begun page* 61, *and dated July* 24.)

WELL, my dear sister! And what say you to the contents of the three enclosed letters? I wish I had been with you and Lord L. at the time you read them, that I might have mingled my tears with yours for the sweet Harriet. Why would my brother despatch these letters without staying till at least he could have informed us of the result of the next day's meeting with Clementina? What was the opportunity that he had to send away these letters, which he must be assured would keep us in strange suspense? Hang the opportunity that so officiously offered! But perhaps in the tenderness of his nature he thought that this despatch was necessary to prepare us for what was to follow, lest, were he to acquaint us with the event as decided, our emotion would be too great to be supported. We sisters to go over to attend Lady Clementina Grandison a twelvemonth hence! Ah! the poor Harriet. And will she give us leave? But it surely must not, cannot be. And yet—hush, hush, hush, Charlotte!—and proceed to facts.

Dr. Bartlett, when these letters were brought him post from London, was with us at table. We had but just dined. He arose, and retired to his own apartment with them. We were all impatient to know the contents. When I thought he had withdrawn long enough to read despatches of a mile long, and yet found that he returned not, my impatience was heightened, and the dear Harriet said, "Bad news, I fear. I hope Sir Charles is well. I hope Lady Clementina is not relapsed. The good Jeronymo! I fear for him."

I then stepped up to the doctor's room. He was sitting with his back towards the door, in a pensive mood; and

when, hearing somebody enter, he turned about, I saw he had been deeply affected.

"My dear Dr. Bartlett, for God's sake, how is my brother?"

"Don't be affrighted, madam. All are well in Italy—in a way to be well. But, alas!" (tears started afresh) "I am grieved for Miss Byron."

"How, how, doctor? Is my brother married? It cannot, it shall not be. Is my brother married?"

"Oh no, not married, by these letters; but all is concluded upon. Sweet, sweet Miss Byron! Now, indeed, will her magnanimity be put to the test. Yet Lady Clementina is a most excellent woman. You, madam, may read these letters; Miss Byron, I believe, must not. You will see by the concluding part of the last how greatly embarrassed my patron must be between his honour to one lady and his tenderness for the other; whichsoever shall be his, how much will the other be to be pitied!"

I ran over, with a weeping eye, as the paragraphs struck me, the passages most affecting. "Oh, Dr. Bartlett," said I, when I had done, "how shall we break this news to Mrs. Selby, to Mrs. Shirley, to my Harriet! A trial, indeed, of her magnanimity! Yet to have received letters from my brother, and to delay going down, will be as alarming as to tell it. Let us go down."

"Do you, madam, take the letters. You have tenderness; your prudence cannot be doubted. I will attend you by-and-by." His eyes were ready to run over.

I went down. I met my lord at the stairs-foot. "How, how, madam, does Sir Charles?"—"Oh, my lord, we are all undone. My brother by this time is the husband of Lady Clementina."

He was struck as with a thunderbolt. "God forbid!" were all the words he could speak, and turned as pale as death.

I love him for his sincere love to my Harriet. I wrung his hand. "The letters do not say it. But everybody is consenting; and, if it be not already so, it soon will. Step, my lord, to Mrs. Selby, and tell her that I wish to see her in the flower-garden."

"Miss Byron and Nancy," said he, "are gone to walk in the garden. She was so apprehensive on your staying above and the doctor not coming down, that she was forced to walk into the air. I left Mr. Selby, his lady, Emily, and Lucy in the dining-parlour to find you, and let you know how everybody was affected." Tears dropped on his cheeks.

I gave him my hand in love. I was pleased with him. I called him my dear lord.

I think our sweet friend once said that fear made us loving. Ill news will oblige us to look around us for consolation.

I found the persons named just rising from their seats to walk into the garden. "Oh, my dear Mrs. Selby," said I, "everything is agreed upon in Italy."

They were all dumb but Emily. Her sorrow was audible. She wrung her hands; she was ready to faint; her Anne was called to take care of her, and she retired.

I then told Mr. and Mrs. Selby what were the contents of the last letter of the three. Mr. Selby broke out into passionate grief. "I know not what the honour is," said he, "that could oblige Sir Charles, treated as he had been by the proud Italians, to go over at the first invitation. One might have guessed that it would have come to this. Oh, the poor Harriet; flower of the world! She deserved not to be made a second woman to the stateliest minx in Italy; but this is my comfort, she is superior to them both. Upon my soul, madam, she is. The man, were he a king, that could prefer another woman to our Harriet does not deserve her."

He then arose from his seat, and walked up and down the room in anger; and afterwards sitting down, "My dear Mrs.

Selby," said he, "we shall now see what the so often pleaded for dignity of your sex in the noblest-minded will enable you to do. But, oh! the dear soul. She will find a difference between theory and practice."

Lucy wept. Her grief was silent. Mrs. Selby's the same for some time. "My dear Lady G.," said she at last, "how shall we break this to Harriet? You must do it, and she will apply to me for comfort. Pray, Mr. Selby, be patient. You must not reflect upon Sir Charles Grandison."

"Indeed you should not, sir," said I. "He is to be pitied. I will read you the concluding part of his last letter."

I did.

But Mr. Selby would not be pacified. He tried to blame my brother.

After all, my dear, these lords of the creation are more violent, more unreasonable, and, of consequence, more silly and perverse—more babies, if you please, than we women, when they are disappointed in anything they set their hearts upon. But in every case, I believe, one extreme borders on another. What a fool has Otway made of Castalio, raving against the whole sex, by a commonplace invective, on a mere temporary disappointment, when the fault, and all the dreadful consequences that attended it, were owing to his own baseness of heart, in being ashamed to acquaint his brother that he meant honourable love to the unhappy orphan, who was entitled to inviolable protection! Whenever I saw this play, I pitied the impetuous Polydore more than I did the blubbering great boy Castalio, though I thought both brothers deserved to be hanged.

As we were meditating how to break this matter to our lovely friend, Mrs. Shirley came to Selby House in her chariot. We immediately acquainted her with it. No surprises affect her steady soul. "This can't be helped," said she. "Our dear girl herself expects it. May I read the letter that contains the affecting tidings?"

She took it. She run it over slightly, to enable herself to speak to the contents. "Excellent man! How happy should we have been, blessed with the enjoyment of our wishes. But you, Mrs. Selby, and I have always pitied Lady Clementina. His generous regard for our child is too apparent for his own tranquillity. God comfort him, and our Harriet! Oh, the dear creature! Her fading cheeks have shown the struggles of her heart in such an expectation. Where is my child?"

I was running out to see for her, and met her just ascending the steps that lead from the garden into the house. "Your grandmamma, my love," said I.

"I hear she is come," answered she. "I am hastening to pay my duty to her."

"But how do you, Harriet?"

"A little better for the air. I sent up to Dr. Bartlett, and he has let me know that Sir Charles is well, and everybody better, and I am easy."

She hurried in to her grandmother, rejoicing, as she always does, to see her. She kneeled, received her tender blessing. "And what brings my grandmamma to her girl?"

"The day is fine; the air and the sight of my Harriet, I thought, would do me good. You have letters, I find, from Italy, my love?"

"I, madam, have not. Dr. Bartlett has; but I am not to know the contents, I suppose—something, I doubt not, that will be thought unwelcome to me by their not being communicated. But as long as everybody there is well, I can have patience. Time will reveal all things."

Dr. Bartlett, who admires the old lady, and is as much admired by her, came down and paid his respects to her. Mrs. Shirley had returned me the letters. I slid them into the doctor's hand, unperceived by Miss Byron.

"I am told," said she, "that my Emily is not well; I will

just ask how she does"—and was going from us. "No, don't, my love," said her aunt, taking her hand; "Emily shall come down to us."

"I see," said she, "by the compassionate looks of every one, that something is the matter. If it be anything that most concerns me to know, don't, through a mistaken tenderness, let me be the last to whom it is communicated. But I guess"—with a forced smile.

"What does my Harriet guess?" said her aunt.

"Dr. Bartlett," replied she, "has acquainted me that Sir Charles Grandison is well, and that his friends are on the recovery; is it not then easy to guess, by every one's silence on the contents of the letters brought to Dr. Bartlett, that Sir Charles is either married or near being so? What say you, my good Dr. Bartlett?"

He was silent, but tears were in his eyes. She turned round and saw us with our handkerchiefs at ours. Her uncle, rising from his seat, stood with his back to us at one of the windows.

"Well, my dear friends—and you are all grieved for me. It is kind, and I can thank you for your concern for me, because the man is Sir Charles Grandison. And so, doctor," laying her hand upon his, "he is actually married? God Almighty," piously bending one knee, "make him and his Clementina happy! Well, my dearest dear friends, and what is there in this more than I expected?"

Her aunt embraced her.

Her uncle ran to her and clasped his arms about her. "Now, now," said he, "have you overcome me, my niece; for the future I never will dispute with you on some of the arguments I have heretofore held against your sex. Were all women like you——"

Her grandmother, as she sat, held out her open arms. "My own Harriet, child of my heart, let me fold you to it." She ran to her and clasped her knees, as the old lady threw

her arms about her neck. "Pray for me, however, my

" Well, my dearest dear friends, and what is there in this more than I expected?"

grandmamma, that I may act up to my judgment, and as your

child, and my aunt Selby's. It is a trial—I own it. But permit me to withdraw for a few moments."

She arose, and was hastening out of the room; but her aunt took her hand. "My dearest love," said she, "Sir Charles Grandison is not married—but——"

"Why, why," interrupted she, "if it must be so, is it not so?"

At that moment in came Emily. She had been trying to suppress her concern, and fancied, it seems, that she had recovered her presence of mind; but the moment she saw her beloved Miss Byron her fortitude forsook her. She gushed into tears, and, sobbing, would have quitted the room; but Miss Byron, stepping after her, caught her arm. "My Emily, my love, my friend, my sister, fly me not; let me give you an example, my dear. I am not ashamed to own myself affected; but I have fortitude, I hope. Sir Charles Grandison, when he could not be happy from his own affairs, made himself a partaker in the happiness of others; and shall not you and I, after so great an example, rejoice in his?"

"I am, I am—grieved," replied the sobbing girl, "for my Miss Byron. I don't love Italian ladies. Were you, madam," turning to her, "Lady Grandison, I should be the happiest creature in the world."

"But, Dr. Bartlett," said I, "may we not, now that Miss Byron knows the worst, communicate to her the contents of these letters?"

"I hope you will, sir," said Mrs. Shirley. "You see that my Harriet is a noble girl."

"I rely upon your judgments, ladies," answered the doctor, and put the letters into Mrs. Shirley's hands.

"I have read them," said I. "We will leave Mrs. Shirley, Mrs. Selby, and Miss Byron together. We—Lucy, Nancy, Emily—will take a walk in the garden. Shall we have your company, Dr. Bartlett?" I saw he was desirous to withdraw. Lucy desired to stay behind; Harriet looked as if she wished

Lucy to stay; and I led the other two into the garden, Dr. Bartlett leaving us at the entrance into it; and I told them the contents of the letters as we walked.

They were greatly affected, as I thought they would be; which made me lead them out. Lord G. joined us in our walk, as well as in our concern, so that the dear Harriet had none but comforters left about her, who enabled her to support her spirits; for Mrs. Shirley and Mrs. Selby had always applauded the preference their beloved child was so ready to give to Clementina, because of her malady, though, it is evident, against their wishes. There never were three nobler women related to each other than Mrs. Shirley, Mrs. Selby, and Miss Byron. But Mr. Selby is by no means satisfied that my brother, loving Harriet, as he evidently does, should be so ready to leave her and go to Italy. His censure arises from his love to my brother and to his niece; but I need not tell you that, though a man, he has not a soul half so capacious as that of either of the three ladies I have named.

At our return from our little walk it was lovely to see Harriet take her Emily aside to comfort her, and to plead with her in favour of my brother's obligations, as afterwards she did against her uncle. How the generous creature shone in my eyes and in those of every one present!

When she and I were alone she took grateful notice of the concluding part of the third letter, where she is mentioned with so much tenderness, and in a manner so truly worthy of the character of the politest of men, as well respecting herself as her sex, charging himself with vanity and presumption, but to suppose to himself that Miss Byron wanted his compassion, or had the tender regard for him that he avows for her. She pleased herself that he had not seen the very great esteem she had for him, as you and I had done. "And how could he, you know?" said she; "for he and I were not often together, and I was under obligation enough to him to make him attribute my regard to gratitude. But it is plain,"

proceeded she, "that he loves the poor Harriet. Don't you think so?—and perhaps would have given her a preference to all other women, had he not been circumstanced as he was. Well, God bless him!" added she; "he was my first love, and I never will have any other. Don't blame me for this declaration, my dear Lady G. My grandmamma as well as you once chid me for saying so, and called me romancer. But is not the man Sir Charles Grandison?"

But, alas! with all these appearances it is easy to see that this amiable creature's solitary hours are heavy ones. She has got a habit of sighing. She rises with swelled eyes, sleep forsakes her, her appetite fails; and she is very sensible of all this, as she shows by the pains she takes to conceal the alteration.

And must Harriet Byron, blessed with beauty so unequalled, health so blooming, a temper so even, passions so governable, generous, and grateful, even to heroism—superior to every woman in frankness of heart, in true delicacy, and in an understanding and judgment beyond her years—must she be offered up as a victim on the altar of hopeless love! I deprecate such a fate; I cannot allow the other sex such a triumph, though the man be my brother. It is, however, none; on the contrary, it is apparently a grief to his noble and truly manly heart that so excellent a creature cannot be the sole mistress of it.

Mr. Deane came hither this morning. He is a valuable man. He opened his heart to me about an hour ago. He always, he says, designed Miss Byron for the heiress of the principal part of his possessions; and he let me know his circumstances, which are great. It is, I am convinced, true policy to be good. Young and old, rich and poor dote upon Miss Byron. You remember what her uncle says in his ludicrous letter to her, covertly praising her, by pretending to find fault with her, that he is more noted for being the uncle of Miss Byron than she is for being his niece, though

of so long standing in the county; and I assure you he is much respected too. But such beauty, such affability, a character so benevolent, so frank, so pious, yet so cheerful and unaffected as hers is, must command the veneration and love of every one.

Mr. Deane is extremely apprehensive of her declining health. He believes her in a consumption, and has brought a physician of his intimate acquaintance to visit her; but she and we all are convinced that medicine will not reach her case, and she affected to be startled at his supposing she was in so bad a way, on purpose, as she owned, to avoid his kind importunity to take advice in a malady that nothing but time and patience can cure.

A charming correspondence is carried on between Harriet and the Countess of D. Harriet is all frankness in it; so is Lady D. One day I hope to procure you a sight of their letters. I am allowed to enclose a copy of the countess's last. You will see the force of the reasoning on Harriet's declaration that she will never think of a second lover. Her grandmother is entirely with the countess. So am I —though the first was Sir Charles Grandison.

What will become of Lady Olivia if the alliance between my brother and the Bologna family take effect? She has her emissaries, who, I suppose, will soon apprise her of it. How will she flame out! I suppose you, who correspond with her, will soon be troubled with her invectives on this subject.

All here wish for you and Lord L. For my part, I long to see you both, and to be seen by you. You never could see me more to my advantage than now. We have nothing between us, but—"What your lordship pleases;" "My dearest life, you have no choice;" "You prevent me, my lord, in all my wishes."

I have told him, in love, of some of his foibles, and he thanks me for my instruction, and is resolved to be all I wish him to be.

I have made discoveries in his favour. More wit, more humour, more good sense, more learning than I had ever till now, that I was willing to inquire after those qualities in him, imagined he had. He allows me to have a vast share of good understanding, and so he ought, when I have made such discoveries to his advantage.

In short, we so monstrously improve upon each other, that if we go on thus we shall hardly know ourselves to be the same man and woman that made such awkward figures in the eyes of all beholders a few months ago at St. George's Church, and must be married over again to be sure of each other; for you must believe that we would not be the same odd souls we then were on any account.

What raises him with me is the good opinion everybody here has of him. They also have found him out to be a man of sense, a good-natured man, nay (would you believe it?), a handsome man—and all these people having deservedly the reputation of good sense, penetration, and so forth. I cannot contradict them with credit to myself. When we married folks have made a silly choice, we should in policy, you know, for the credit of our judgment, try to make the best of it. I could name you half-a-score people who are continually praising—the man his wife, the woman her husband—who, were they at liberty to choose again, would be hanged before they would renew their bargain.

Let me tell you that Emily will make an excellent wife and mistress of a family. Miss Byron is one of the best economists, and yet one of the finest ladies in the county. As soon as she came down she resumed the family direction in ease of her aunt, which was her province before she came to London. I thought myself a tolerable manager, but she has for ever stopped my mouth on this subject. Such a succession of orderliness, if I may so call it! One right thing is an introduction to another, and all is in such a method that it seems impossible for the meanest servants to mistake

their duty. Such harmony, such observance, yet such pleasure in every countenance! But she is mistress of so much ease, so much dignity, and so much condescension, that she is worshipped by all the servants, and, it is observable, hardly ever was heard to direct twice the same thing to be done or remembered.

The servants have generally time for themselves, an hour or two in a day. Her orders are given over night; and as the family live in a genteel manner, they are never surprised or put out of course by company. The poor only have the less of the remnants if visitors or guests come in unexpectedly, and in such case, she says, they shall fare better another day. Emily is taking minutes of all her management; she is resolved to imitate her in everything; hence it is that I say the girl will make one of the best wives in England. Yet how the dear Harriet manages it I cannot tell, for we hardly ever miss her; but early hours, and method, and ease, without hurry, will do everything.

Postscript

Lord bless me! my dear Lady L., I have been frightened out of my wits. This Lord G.! What do we do by marriage but double our cares? He was taken very ill two hours ago —a kind of fit. The first reflection that crossed me when he was at worst was this—what a wretch was I to vex this poor man as I have done! Happy, happy is the wife, in the depth of her affliction, on the loss of a worthy husband; happy the husband, if he must be separated from a good wife, who has no material cause for self-reproach to embitter reflection, as to his or her conduct to the departed. Ah! Caroline, how little do we know of ourselves till the hour of trial comes. I find I have more love for Lord G. than I thought I had, or could have, for any man.

. . . . . .

How have I exposed myself! But they none of them upbraid me with my apprehensions for the honest man. He did fright me. A wretch! In his childhood he was troubled with these oddities, it seems. He is so well that I had a good mind to quarrel with him for terrifying me as he did. For better and for worse. A cheat! He should have told me that he had been subject to such an infirmity; and, then, from his apprehended fits, though involuntary, I should have claimed allowance for my real though wilful ones; in which, however, I cheated not him. He saw me in them many and many a good time before marriage.

I have this moment yours. I thought what would be the case with Olivia. She has certainly heard of the happy turn at Bologna, as they there must think it, or she would not resolve to leave England so soon, when she had determined to stay here till my brother's return. Unhappy woman! Harriet pities her. But she has pity for every one that wants it.

Repeatedly all here are earnest to get you and your lord with us. Do come if you can, were it but one week, and perhaps we will go up together. If you don't come soon, your people will not suffer you to come one while. After all, my dear, these men are, as Aunt Nell would say, odious creatures. You are a good forgiving soul, but that am not I. In a few months' time I shall be as grave as a cat, I suppose; but the sorry fellow knows nothing of the matter yet. Adieu, Lady L.

In LETTERS XVIII.–XXV. (Vol. v.) *Lady D. reappears not importantly; Lady G.'s father-in-law expostulates with her on her and his son's absence in Northamptonshire; and there is some correspondence between Charlotte and Harriet. The thread of the Italian story is then resumed, as usual,*

in letters from Sir Charles to Dr. Bartlett, and comes to a point of climax in the following. It is to be remembered that Father Marescotti is the confessor of the Porretta family, and the Count of Belvedere Sir Charles's rival with Clementina.

LETTER XXVI [v]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

I was obliged to lay down my pen. My mind was too much disturbed to write on.

We had a great deal of discourse, before we quitted Jeronymo's chamber, on this extraordinary subject. They all, as I told you, expressed their doubts whether the lady would be able to persist in her new resolution. The marquis and marchioness gave their opinion that she should be left entirely to the workings of her own will; and the count proposed, by way of enforcing their opinions, that neither the bishop and Father Marescotti on one hand (though religion was in the question), nor Jeronymo and myself on the other, should endeavour to prevail upon her, either to alter or persevere in her way of thinking. Jeronymo said he desired only one conversation with his sister alone, before he complied with this proposal.

They put it to me. I said that several passages in her paper were of too solemn a nature for me to refuse my consent to their proposal; but, however, if I should observe, in future conversations between her and me, that she was inclined to alter her mind, and seemed to wish to be encouraged to declare the alteration, they must allow me, for the sake of my own honour as a man, and of her delicacy as a woman, to show the ardour of my attachment to her by my preventing declaration and even entreaty.

The marchioness bowed to me with a grateful smile of approbation.

Father Marescotti hesitated, as if he had something of an objection to make; but he was silenced by the marquis's saying, "On your honour, on your delicacy, I am sure, chevalier, we may rely."

"I am absolutely of opinion that we may," said the count. "The chevalier can put himself in every one's situation, and can forget his own interest, when a right and just measure is to be taken."

"This is true," said Jeronymo. "But let it be our part to show the chevalier that he is not the only man in the world who can do so."

"You must remember, my dear Jeronymo," said the bishop, "that religion is a consideration superior to all others. Shall our sister, who follows the example set her by the chevalier, be discouraged in an effort so noble? But I am willing to subscribe to the proposal as an equal one."

"Father Marescotti," said I, "you must return me the paper. I must often have recourse to it to strengthen my own mind, in order to enable myself to answer your expectations."

The father desired leave to take a copy of it in shorthand, and retired for that purpose.

I have no doubt but he will make great use of it with the family, and perhaps with the lady, should there be occasion hereafter. For my own part, if the noble enthusiast, when the heat of her imagination is gone off, shall persist in believing that she has a Divine impulse in favour of her resolution, and that given in answer to her prayers, I will endeavour to show her that her call upon me to support her in it, though against myself, shall be answered, whatever it cost me.

They prevailed on me to stay dinner. She excused herself from being present, but desired to see me when it was over.

Camilla then led me to her. I found her in tears. She was afraid, she said, that I would not forgive her; yet I

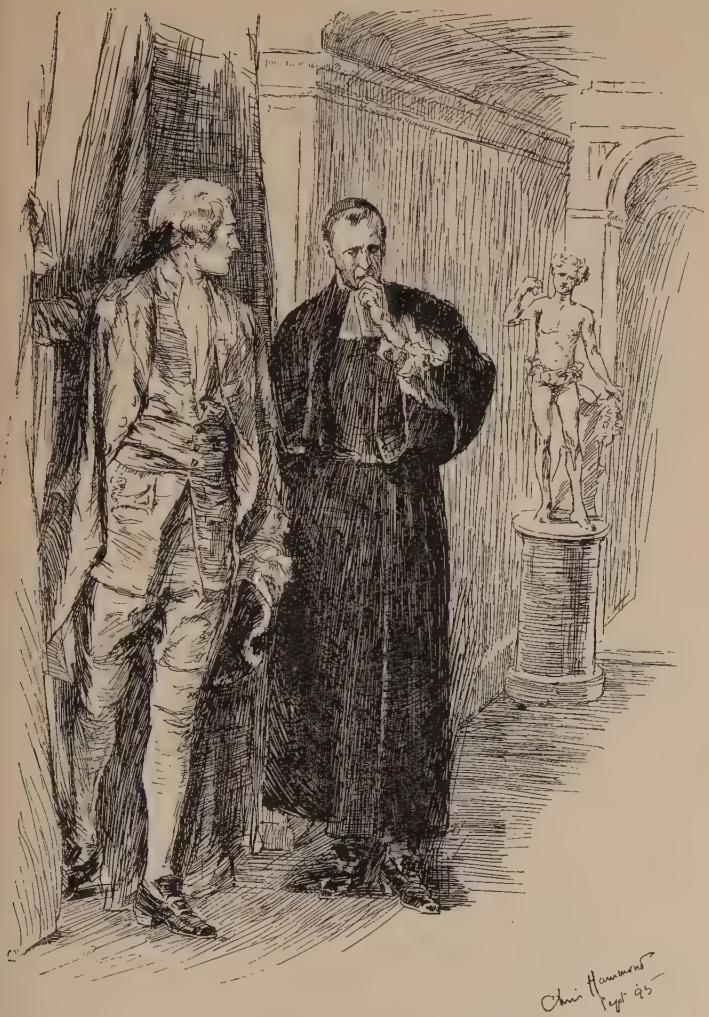
would, she was sure, if I knew the conflicts with which her soul laboured.

I soothed her disturbed mind. I told her that I desired her direction, and was resolved to pursue it. Her paper should be one of my constant lessons, and her conscience the rule of my conduct with regard to my expectations of her favour.

"Oh, sir," said she, "how good you are. It is from your generosity, next to the Divine assistance, that I expect support in my resolution. I but imperfectly remember what I would have done and what I consented to when you were last amongst us; but when I best knew myself, I was more inclined to support my parents and brothers in their expectations with regard to the two great articles of religion and residence than to comply with yours. My fortune, my rank merited your consideration, and my pride was sometimes piqued; but it was the regard that I had to the welfare of your immortal soul that weighed most with me. Oh, sir, could you have been a Catholic!"

She then wrung her clasped hands, and tears trickled down her cheeks. "God Almighty convert you, chevalier! But you must leave me. I am beginning to be again unhappy. Leave me, sir; but let me see you to-morrow. I will pray for a composure of mind in the meantime. Do you pray for me too. And pray for yourself, chevalier. The welfare of your soul, your immortal soul, was ever my principal concern."

She began to ramble. Her looks were a little wild. I took leave of her; and going hastily from her, in order to hide my own emotion, I surprised Father Marescotti, who, as was at first sight evident to me, from the confusion I found him in and the attempts he hesitatingly made to excuse himself, had been listening to what passed between the lady and me. Pity that a well-intended zeal should make a good man do mean things.



Going hastily from her, in order to hide my own emotion, I surprised Father Marescotti.

"No apologies, my dear father," said I. "If you doubted my honour, I can think myself in some measure obliged to your condescension for taking this method to prove me. Allow me, my dear sir, to say" (it is to Father Marescotti) "that the man who, in the greater actions of his life, thinks himself under the All-seeing eye, will not be afraid of a fellow-creature's ear."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said he, hesitating, and in confusion; "but I will confess the truth. I believed it was next to impossible that a young man whose love to one of the most excellent of women is not to be questioned should be able to keep the conditions prescribed to him, and forbear to make use of the power she acknowledges he has over her affections. But forgive me, chevalier."

"Forgive yourself, my dear father; I do most heartily forgive you."

I led him down to Jeronymo's chamber, begging of him not to say a syllable more of this matter, and not to let me suffer in his esteem by this accident.

I have more than once, Dr. Bartlett, experienced the irreconcilable enmity of a man whom I have forgiven for a meanness, and who was less able to forgive me my forgiveness than I was him his fault. But Father Marescotti cannot be such a man. He is capable of generous shame: he could hardly hold up his head all the time I stayed.

I related to the family, in the presence of the father, the substance of what passed between the lady and me. They seemed surprised at her steadfastness. The bishop told me that he had despatched a messenger post to the general with a letter, in which he had written a faithful account of their present situation. He would show me a copy of it if I pleased. I was sure, I said, I could depend upon his generosity and honour, and should be glad to know the sentiments of the general and his lady upon it when they returned an answer.

I promised to attend them in the morning, and, going to my lodgings, found there waiting for me the Count of Belvedere. Saunders and his gentleman were both together below stairs, waiting for, yet dreading, as they said, my return. Saunders had told the count it was uncertain, but he declared that he would wait for me, were it ever so late. They both besought me to take care of my own safety. His gentleman told me that his master had been very much disturbed in his mind ever since he was with me last, declaring often that his life was a burden to him. He believed, he said, he had a brace of pistols with him, and then again expressed his care for my safety as well as his lord's. "Fear not," said I; "the count is a man of honour. I would not for the world hurt him, and I dare say he will not hurt me."

I hastened up. "Why, my lord," said I (taking his unwilling hands each in mine for a double reason), "did you not let me know you intended me this honour, or why did not your lordship send for me as soon as you came?"

"Send for you?" with a melancholy air. "What, from your Clementina? No! But tell me what is concluded upon. My soul is impatient to know. Answer me like a man—answer me like a man of honour."

"Nothing, my lord, is concluded upon; nothing can be concluded upon till Lady Clementina's mind be fully known."

"If that be all the obstacle——"

"Not a slight one. I assure you that Clementina knows her own worth. She will put a just value upon herself. In her unhappy delirium she always preserved a high sense of that delicacy which distinguishes the woman of true honour. It shines forth now in all her words and actions with redoubled lustre. She will make the more difficulties as her friends make less. Nothing can be done soon; and if it will make your lordship easier (for I see you are disturbed),

I will acquaint you when anything is likely to be carried into effect."

"And is nothing yet concluded on? And will you give me such notice?"

"I will, my lord."

"Upon your honour?"

"Upon my honour."

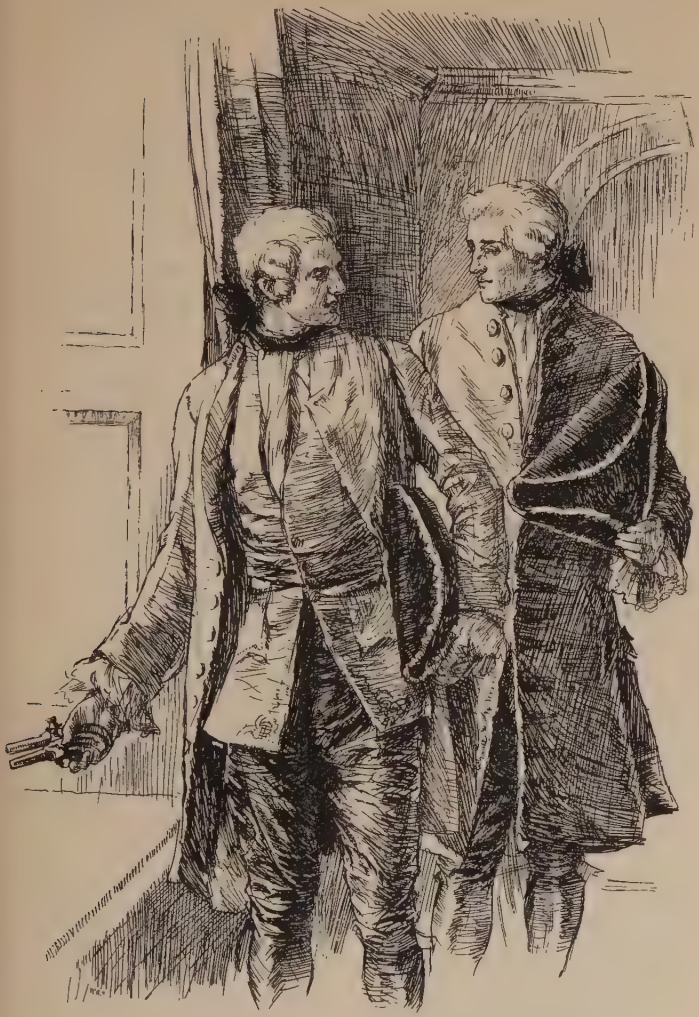
"Well, then, I have some days longer to crawl upon this earth."

"What means my lord?"

"This I mean," withdrawing his hands from mine, and taking out of his pockets two pistols: "I came resolved that you should take one of these at your choice, had the affair been concluded upon, as I dreaded it would. I am no assassin, sir, nor ever employed one; nor would I have deprived Clementina of her elected husband. All I intended was, that the hand to which she is to give hers should have first taken my life. I will not, I cannot live to see her the wife of any man on earth, though she has refused to be mine. You should have found I would not."

"What a rashness! But I see your mind is disturbed. The Count of Belvedere could not otherwise talk in this manner."

It is not impossible, surely, my dear Dr. Bartlett (however improbable, as I begin to apprehend), that Clementina may change her mind. I could not, therefore, acquaint the count with our present situation, because the hope he would have conceived from it would, in case of a change, have added strength to his despair. I contented myself, therefore, to reason with him on his rash intention; and having renewed my assurances as above, he took leave of me so much recovered as to thank me for the advice I had given him, and to promise that he would make it the foundation of his prayers to Heaven for a calmer mind than he had known for some days past.



In passing through my antechamber to the stairs, laid in one of the windows the two pistols.

Saunders and his valet seemed overjoyed at seeing us come down together in an amicable manner, and in the high civility each paid the other.

I should have mentioned that the count, of his own accord, in passing through my antechamber to the stairs, laid in one of the windows the two pistols. "My dear Grandison," said he, "let these remain in your keeping. They are pieces of curious workmanship. Whither might one of them by this time have sent me, and in what difficulties might you, the survivor, a foreigner, have been involved?—which then I considered not, for all my malice was levelled against my unhappy self. I will not trust myself with them."

Here I conclude for this night. I will not despatch these last written letters till I see what to-morrow will produce. My dear friend, how grievous is suspense! Perhaps I should have thought myself more obliged to bear it had I been thus entangled, fettered, suspended by my own fault.

The Italian story occupies almost the whole of the remaining letters of Vol. v. XXVII.–XXIX. *are from Sir Charles to Dr. Bartlett, telling how Clementina is more and more fixed on not marrying a Protestant while he will not change his faith. After an interchange of letters between Charlotte and Harriet—the first sending, the second acknowledging this correspondence with Dr. Bartlett, a series,* XXXII.–XXXV., *between Sir Charles and Clementina herself, begins, in which she declares her intention of taking the veil, after explaining her scruples and avowing her love. Sir Charles again writes* (XXXVI.) *to Dr. Bartlett, and this is followed by various letters from the same to the same relating to his departure from Italy, as well as an interchange with Lady Olivia. Lady G. informs Harriet of her brother's return.*

LETTER XLIV [v]

MISS HARRIET BYRON TO LADY G.

Thursday, September 7.

I WILL write to your letter as it lies before me.

I do most heartily congratulate you, my dear Lady G., no the arrival of your brother. I do not wonder that his fatigues and his disappointment have made an alteration in his person and countenance. Sir Charles Grandison would not be the man he is if he had not sensibility.

You could not know your brother, my dear, if you expected from him recriminations on your past odd behaviour to Lord G. I hope he does not yet know a tenth part of it; but if he did, as he hoped you saw your error and would be good for the future, he was right surely to forget what you ought not, but with contrition, to remember. You are very naughty in the letter before me, and I love you too well to spare you.

What can you mean, my dear, by exulting so much over your aunt for living to an advanced age a single woman? However ineffectual, let me add to my former expostulatory chidings on this subject. Would you have one think you are overjoyed that you have so soon put it out of any one's power to reproach you on the like account? If so, you ought to be more thankful than you seem to be to Lord G., who has extended his generosity to you and kept you from the odium. Upon my word, my dear Lady G., I think it looks like a want of decency in women to cast reflections on others of their sex, possibly for their prudence and virtue. Do you consider how you exalt, by your ludicrous freedoms, the men whom sometimes you affect to despise? No wonder if they ridicule old maids. It is their interest to do so. "Lords of the creation" sometimes you deridingly call the insulters; lords of the creation, indeed, you make them.

And, pray, do you think that the same weakness which made your aunt Grandison tell her dreams, in the joy of her heart, as an old maid, might not have made her guilty of the same foible had she been an old wife? Joy is the parent of many a silly thing. Don't you own that the arrival of your brother, which made your aunt break out into dream-telling, made you break into laughter (even in a letter), of which you were ashamed to tell the cause? Wives, my dear, should not fall into the mistakes for which they would make maids the subject of their ridicule. You know better, and therefore should be above joining the foolish multitude in a general cry to hunt down an unfortunate class of people (as you reckon them) of your own sex. Your aunt Grandison's dreams, let me add, were more innocent than your waking mirth. You must excuse me. I could say a great deal more upon the subject; but, if I have not said enough to make you sorry for your fault, a great deal more would be ineffectual. So much therefore for this subject.

Poor dear Emily! I wonder not at the effect the arrival and first sight of her guardian had upon her tender heart.

But how wickedly do you treat your lord! Fie upon you, Charlotte! And fie upon you again, for writing what I cannot for your credit's sake read out to my friends. I wish, my dear, I could bring you to think that there cannot be wit without justice, nor humour without decorum. My lord has some few foibles; but shall a wife be the first to discover them and expose him for them? Cannot you cure him of them without treating him with a ridicule which borders upon contempt? Oh, my dear, you show us much greater foibles in yourself than my lord ever yet had, when you make so bad an use of talents that were given you for better purposes. One word only more on this subject. You cannot make me smile, my dear, when you are thus unseasonable in your mirth. Henceforth, then, remember that your excursiveness (allow me the word—

I had a harsher in my head) upon old maids and your lord can only please yourself; and I will not accept of your compliment, because I will not be a partaker in your fault, as I should be if I could countenance your levity.

"Levity, Harriet!"

Yes, levity, Charlotte. I will not spare you. Whom do you spare?

But do you really think me so ill as you represented me to be to your brother? I don't think I am. If I did, I am sure I should endeavour to put my thoughts into an absolutely new train; nor would I quit the hold which, at proper times, I do let go, to re-enter the world as an individual who imagines herself of some little use in it, and who is therefore obliged to perform with cheerfulness her allotted offices, however generally insignificant I may comparatively be.

You say you had no thoughts of exciting your brother's attention by your strong colouring, when you described the effects of my indisposition to him. Attention!—"compassion" you might as well have said. I hope not. And I am obliged to Mr. Beauchamp for his inference from my cheerfulness that nothing lay upon my mind. Now, though that inference seemed to imply that he thought, if he had not made the observation, something might have been supposed to lie upon my mind, I am much better satisfied that he made it than if Sir Charles had.

Upon the whole, I cannot but be pleased at two things in your letter: the one that Sir Charles expressed so great a concern for my health, the other that you have all promised, and that voluntarily, and from a sense of the fitness of the measure, that everything shall be left to its natural course. For my sake, and for goodness' sake, pray let it be so. I think the opening, as you call it, was much, very much too warm. Bless me, my dear, how I trembled as I read that part! I am not, methinks, quite satisfied with it, though I am with your intention.

Consider, my dear, half a heart. A preferred lady! For quality, fortune, and every merit so greatly preferable. Oh, my Charlotte, I cannot, were the best to happen that can, take such exceeding great joy as I once could have done in the prospect of that best. I have pride. But let us hear what the next letters from Italy say, and it will be then time enough (if the truly admirable lady shall adhere to her resolution) to come with my scruples and drawbacks. Your aunt Grandison is of opinion that she will not adhere. Who can tell what to say? Imagination, unnaturally heightened, may change into one altitude from another. I myself sincerely think (and have so often said it, that an uncharitable mind would perhaps charge me with affectation for it) that Lady Clementina, and no other woman, can deserve Sir Charles Grandison.

Adieu, my dear. Pray tell your brother that I never thought myself so ill as your friendly love made you apprehend me to be, and that I congratulate you with all my heart, and him also (it would be an affectation to forbear it, which would imply too much), on his safe arrival in England. But be sure remember that I look upon you and your lord, upon my Lord and Lady L., and upon my sweet Emily, if she sees what I write, as guardians of the honour (of the punctilio, if you please, since no dishonour can be apprehended from Sir Charles Grandison) of

Your and their

HARRIET BYRON.

The last letter of Vol. v. *is from Dr. Bartlett to Lady G., recounting various performances of the hero. The first seven letters of* Vol. vi. *are again diverse, ranging from correspondence between Sir Charles, Clementina, and Jeronymo, to information from Mrs. Reeves to Miss Byron, that Sir Charles is certainly about to address her in form. Harriet objects Clementina's superior claims, and her own impatience of a divided affection.*

LETTER VIII [vi]

MISS BYRON TO LADY G.

SELBY HOUSE, *Wednesday, September* 20.

MY DEAREST LADY G.,—Do you know what is become of your brother? My grandmamma Shirley has seen his ghost, and talked with it near an hour, and then it vanished. Be not surprised, my dear creature. I am still in amaze at the account my grandmamma gives us of its appearance, discourse, and vanishing. Nor was the dear parent in a reverie. It happened in the middle of the afternoon, all in broad day.

Thus she tells it: "I was sitting," said she, "in my own drawing-room, yesterday, by myself, when in came James, to whom it first appeared, and told me that a gentleman desired to be introduced to me. I was reading 'Sherlock upon Death,' with that cheerfulness with which I always meditate on the subject. I gave orders for his admittance, and in came, to appearance, one of the handsomest men I ever saw in my life, in a riding-dress. It was a courteous ghost; it saluted me, or at least I thought it did; for it answering to the description that you, my Harriet, had given me of that

amiable man, I was surprised. But, contrary to the manner of ghosts, it spoke first. 'Venerable lady,' it called me, and said its name was Grandison, in a voice—so like what I had heard you speak of his that I had no doubt but it was Sir Charles Grandison himself, and was ready to fall down to welcome him.

"It took its place by me. 'You, madam,' it said, 'will forgive this intrusion;' and it made several fine speeches, with an air so modest, so manly. It had almost all the talk to itself. I could only bow and be pleased, for still I thought it was corporally, and, indeed, Sir Charles Grandison. It said that it had but a very little while to stay; it must reach, I don't know what place, that night. 'What,' said I, 'will you not go to Selby House? Will you not see my daughter Byron? Will you not see her aunt Selby?' No, it desired to be excused. It talked of leaving a packet behind it, and seemed to pull out of its pocket a parcel of letters sealed up. It broke the seal, and laid the parcel on the table before me. It refused refreshment. It desired, in a courtly manner, an answer to what it had discoursed upon, made a profound reverence, and—vanished."

And now, my dear Lady G., let me repeat my question, What is become of your brother?

Forgive me this light, this amusing manner. My grandmamma speaks of this visit as an appearance so sudden and so short, and nobody seeing him but she, that it gave a kind of amusing levity to my pen; and I could not resist the temptation I was under to surprise you, as he has done us all. How could he take such a journey, see nobody but my grandmamma, and fly the country? Did he do it to spare us, or to spare himself?

The direct truth is this: my grandmamma was sitting by herself as above; James told her, as above, that a gentleman desired to be introduced to her. He was introduced. He called himself by his own name, took her hand, saluted her.

" Made a profound reverence, and—vanished."

"Your character, madam, and mine," said he, "are so well known to each other that, though I never before had the honour of approaching you, I may presume upon your pardon for this intrusion."

He then launched out in the praises of your happy friend. With what delight did the dear, the indulgent parent repeat them from his mouth! I hope she mingled not her own partialities with them, whether I deserve them or not, for sweet is praise from those we wish to love us. And then he said, "You see before you, madam, a man glorying in his affection to one of the most excellent of your sex, an Italian lady, the pride of Italy, and who, from motives which cannot be withstood, has rejected him at the very time that, all her friends consenting, and innumerable difficulties overcome, he expected that she would yield her hand to his wishes—and they were his wishes. My friendship for the dear Miss Byron" (you and she must authorise me to call it by a still dearer name, before I dare to do it) "is well known: that also has been my pride. I know too well what belongs to female delicacy in general, and particularly to that of Miss Byron, to address myself first to her on the subject which occasions you this trouble. I am not accustomed to make professions—not even to ladies. Is it consistent with your notions of delicacy, madam? Will it be with Mr. and Mrs. Selby's—to give your interest in favour of a man who is thus situated? A rejected man! A man who dares to own that the rejection was a disappointment to him, and that he tenderly loved the fair rejecter? If it will, and Miss Byron can accept the tender of a heart that has been divided, unaccountably, so (the circumstances, I presume, you know) then will you, then will she lay me under an obligation that I can only endeavour to repay by the utmost gratitude and affection. But if not, I shall admire the delicacy of the second refuser, as I do the piety of the first, and at least suspend all thoughts of a change of condition."

Noblest of men! And my grandmamma was proceeding in high strains, but very sincere ones, when, interrupting her, and pulling out of his pocket the packet I mentioned above, "I presume, madam," said he, "that I see favour and goodness to me in your benign countenance; but I will not even be favoured, but upon your full knowledge of all the facts I am master of myself. I will be the guardian of the delicacy of Miss Byron and all her friends in this important case, rather than the discourager, though I were to suffer by it. You will be so good as to read these letters to your daughter Byron, to her Lucy, to Mr. and Mrs. Selby, and to whom else you will think fit to call to the consultation: they will be those, I presume, who already know something of the history of the excellent Clementina. If, on the perusal of them, I may be admitted to pay my respects to Miss Byron consistently, as I hinted, with her notions and yours of that delicacy by which she was always directed, and at the same time be received with that noble frankness which has distinguished her in my eye above all women but one (excuse me, madam, I must always put these sister-souls upon an equal foot of excellence), then shall I be a happier man than the happiest. Your answer, madam, by pen and ink will greatly oblige me, and the more the sooner I can be favoured with it; because, being requested by my friends abroad to set an example to their beloved Clementina, as you will see in more than one of these letters, I would avoid all punctilio, and let them know that I had offered myself to Miss Byron, and have not been mortified with absolute denial, if I may be so happy as to be allowed to write so."

Thus did this most generous of men prevent, by this reference to the letters, my grandmamma's heart overflowing to her lips. He should directly, he said, proceed on his journey to London, and was in such haste to be gone, when he had said what he had to say, that it precipitated a little my grandmamma's spirits; but the joy she was filled with on the

occasion was so great that she only had a concern upon her when he was gone, as if something was left by her undone or unsaid which she thought should have been said and done to oblige him.

The letters he left on the table were copies of what he wrote from Lyons to the marquis and marchioness, the bishop, the general, and Father Marescotti, as also to Lady Clementina and her brother, the good Jeronymo.[1] That to the lady cannot be enough admired for the tenderness, yet for the acquiescence with her will expressed in it. Surely they were born for each other, however it happens that they are not likely to be united.

A letter from Signor Jeronymo, in answer to his from Lyons, I will mention next. In this Sir Charles is wished to use his supposed influence upon Lady Clementina (what a hard task upon him!) to dissuade her from the thoughts of going into a nunnery, and to resolve upon marriage.[2]

Next is a letter of Lady Clementina to Sir Charles, complaining tenderly of persecution from her friends, who press her to marry; while she contends to be allowed to take the veil, and applies to Sir Charles for his interest in her behalf.

The next is Sir Charles's reply to Lady Clementina.

Then follows a letter from Sir Charles to Signor Jeronymo. I have copied these three last, and enclose them in confidence.[3]

By these you will see, my dear, that the affair between this excellent man and woman is entirely given up by both; and also, in his reply to Signor Jeronymo, that your Harriet is referred to as his next choice. And how can I ever enough value him for the dignity he has given me in putting it, as it should seem, in my power to lay an obligation upon him in making for me my own scruples, and now, lastly, in the method he has taken in the application to my grandmamma

[1] These letters are omitted in this collection.
[2] Letter II. [3] Letters III.–V.

instead of to me, and leaving all to our determination? But thus should the men give dignity, even for their own sakes, to the women whom they wish to be theirs. Were there more Sir Charles Grandisons, would not even the female world (much better, as I hope it is, than the male) be amended?

My grandmamma, the moment Sir Charles was gone, sent to us that she had some very agreeable news to surprise us with; and therefore desired the whole family of us, her Byron particularly, to attend her at breakfast the next morning. We looked upon one another at the message, and wondered. I was not well, and would have excused myself; but my aunt insisted upon my going. Little did I or anybody else think of your brother having visited my grandmamma in person. When she acquainted us that he had, my weakened spirits wanted support: I was obliged to withdraw with Lucy.

I thought I could not bear, when I recovered myself, that he should be so near, and not once call in and inquire after the health of the creature for whom he professed so high an esteem and even affection; but when, on my return to company, my grandmamma related what passed between them, and the letters were read, then again were my failing spirits unable to support me. They all gazed upon me as the letters were reading, as well as while my grandmamma was giving the relation of what he said, and of the noble, the manly air with which he delivered himself. With joy and silent congratulation they gazed upon me, while I felt such a variety of sensibilities in my heart as I never felt before—sensibilities mixed with wonder; and I was sometimes ready to doubt whether I were not in a reverie, whether indeed I was in this world or another, whether I was Harriet Byron. I know not how to describe what I felt in my now fluttering, now rejoicing, now dejected heart.

Dejected? Yes, my dear Lady G. Dejection was a strong

ingredient in my sensibilities. I know not why. Yet may there not be a fulness in joy that will mingle dissatisfaction with it? If there may, shall I be excused for my solemnity, if I deduce from thence an argument that the human soul is not to be fully satisfied by worldly enjoyments, and that therefore the completion of its happiness must be in another, a more perfect state? You, Lady G., are a very good woman, though a lively one; and I will not excuse you, if on an occasion that bids me look forward to a very solemn event, you will not forgive my seriousness. That bids me look forward, I repeat; for Sir Charles Grandison cannot alter his mind. The world has not wherewith to tempt him to alter it, after he has made such advances, except I misbehave.

Well, my dear, and what was the result of our conference? My grandmamma, my aunt, and Lucy were of opinion that I ought no more to revolve the notions of a divided or second-placed love; that every point of female delicacy was answered; that he ought not only still to be allowed to love Lady Clementina, but that I and all her sex should revere her; that my grandmamma, being the person applied to, should answer for me, for us all, in words of her own choosing.

I was silent. "What think you, my dear?" said my aunt.

"Think!" said my uncle, with his usual facetiousness. "Do you think, if Harriet had one objection, she would have been silent? I am for sending up for Sir Charles directly. Let him come the first day of next week, and let them be married before the end of it."

"Not quite so hasty neither, Mr. Selby," said my grandmamma, smiling; "let us send to Mr. Deane. His love for my child and regard for us all deserve the most grateful returns."

"What a deuce—and defer an answer to Sir Charles, who gives a generous reason for the sake of the lady abroad and

her family (and I hope he thinks a little of his own sake), for wishing a speedy answer?"

"No, Mr. Selby—not defer writing neither. We know enough of Mr. Deane's mind already. But, for my part, I don't know what terms, what conditions, what additions to my child's fortune to propose."

"Additions, madam. Why, oy; there must be some, to be sure; and we are able, and as willing as able, let me tell you, to make them."

"I beseech you, sir," said I. "Pray, madam—no more of this. Surely it is time enough to talk of these subjects."

"So it is, niece. Mr. Deane is a lawyer. God help me! I never was brought up to anything but to live on the fat of the land, as the saying is. Mr. Deane and Sir Charles shall talk this matter over by themselves. Let us, as you say, send for Mr. Deane. But I will myself be the messenger of these joyful tidings."

My uncle then tuned out, in his gay manner, a line of an old song, and then said, "I'll go to Mr. Deane: I will set out this very day. Pull down the wall, as one of our kings said; the door is too far about. I'll bring Mr. Deane with me to-morrow, or it shall cost me a fall."

You know my uncle, my dear. In this manner did he express his joy.

My grandmother retired to her closet, and this that follows is what she wrote to Sir Charles. Everybody is pleased whenever she takes up the pen. No one made objection to a single word in it.

"DEAR SIR,—Reserve would be unpardonable on our side, though the woman's, to a man who is above reserve, and whose offers are the result of deliberation and an affection that, being founded in the merit of our dearest child, cannot be doubted. We all receive as an honour the offer you make us of an alliance which would do credit to families of the first

rank. It will perhaps be one day owned to you that it was the height of Mrs. Selby's wishes and mine that the man who had rescued the dear creature from insult and distress might be at liberty to entitle himself to her grateful love.

"The noble manner in which you have explained yourself on a subject which has greatly embarrassed you, has abundantly satisfied Mrs. Selby and myself: we can have no scruples of delicacy. Nor am I afraid of suffering from yours by my frankness. But, as to our Harriet—you may perhaps meet with some (not affectation—she is above it) difficulty with her, if you expect her whole heart to be yours. She, sir, experimentally knows how to allow for a double, a divided love. Dr. Bartlett, perhaps, should not have favoured her with the character of a lady whom she prefers to herself, and Mrs. Selby and I have sometimes, as we read her melancholy story, thought not unjustly. If she can be induced to love, to honour the man of her choice as much as she loves, honours, and admires Lady Clementina, the happy man will have reason to be satisfied. You see, sir, that we who were able to give a preference to the same lady against ourselves (Harriet Byron is ourself) can have no scruples on your giving it to the same incomparable woman. May that lady be happy! If she were not to be so, and her unhappiness were to be owing to our happiness—that, dear sir, would be all that could pain the hearts of any of us on an occasion so very agreeable to

"Your sincere friend and servant,

"HENRIETTA SHIRLEY."

But, my dear Lady G., does your brother tell you and Lady L. nothing of his intentions? Why, if he does, do not you—but I can have no doubt. Is not the man Sir Charles Grandison? And yet, methinks, I want to know what the contents of his next letters from Italy will be.

You will have no scruple, my dear Lady G., to show my

whole letter to Lady L., and, if you please, to my Emily; but only mention the contents in your own way to the gentlemen. I beg you will yourself show it to Mrs. Reeves: she will rejoice in her prognostications. Use that word to her: she will understand you. Your brother must now, less than ever, see what I write. I depend upon your discretion, my dear Lady G.

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER IX [vi]

LADY G. TO MISS BYRON

Saturday, September 23.

EXCELLENT Mrs. Shirley! Incomparable woman! How I love her! If I were such an excellent ancient, I would no more wish to be young than she has so often told us she does. What my brother once said, and you once wrote to your Lucy, is true (in her case, at least), that the matronly and advanced time of life in a woman is far from being the least eligible part of it—especially, I may add, when health and a good conscience accompany it. What a spirit does she, at her time of life, write with! But her heart is in her subject. I hope I may say that, Harriet, without offending you.

Not a word did my brother speak of his intention till he received that letter, and then he invited Lady L. and me, and our two honest men, to afternoon tea with him. Oh, but I have not reckoned with you for your saucy rebukes in your last of the 7th—I owe you a spite for it; and, Harriet, depend on payment. What was I writing? I have it. And when tea was over, he, without a blush, without looking down, as a girl would do in this situation (but why so, Harriet? Is a woman on these occasions to act a part as if she supposed

herself to be the greatest gainer by matrimony, and therefore was ashamed of consenting to accept of an honourable offer? —as if, in other words, she was to be the self-denying receiver rather than conferrer of an obligation? Lord, how we rambling-headed creatures break in upon ourselves!), with a good grace he told us of his intention to marry, of his apparition to Mrs. Shirley, of his sudden vanishing, and all that; and then he produced Mrs. Shirley's letter, but just received.

And do you think we were not overjoyed? Indeed we were. We congratulated him; we congratulated each other. Lord L. looked as he did when Caroline gave him his happy day. Lord G. could not keep his seat: he was tipsy, poor man, with his joy. Aunt Nell pranked herself, stroked her ribands of pink and yellow, and chuckled and mumped for joy that her nephew at last would not go out of Old England for a wife. She was mightily pleased too with Mrs. Shirley's letter. It was just such a one as she herself would have written upon the occasion.

I posted afterwards to Mrs. Reeves, to show her, as you requested, your letter; and when we had read it there was "Dear Madam" and "Dear Sir," and now this and now that, and "Thank God"—three times in a breath. And we were cousins, and cousin, and cousins; and, "O blessed!" and, "Oh, be joyful," and, "Hail the day!" and, "God grant it to be a short one!" and, "How will Harriet answer the question? Will not her frankness be tried?" "He despises affectation; so he thinks does she!" "Good sirs!" and "Oh, dears!" "How things are brought about!" Oh, my Harriet, you never heard or saw such congratulations between three gossips as were between our two cousin Reeves's and me; and not a little did the good woman pride herself in her prognostics, for she explained that matter to me.

Dr. Bartlett is at Grandison Hall with our unhappy cousin. How will the good man rejoice!

Now you will ask what became of Emily.

By the way, do you know that Mrs. O'Hara is turned Methodist? True as you are alive; and she labours hard to convert her husband. Thank God she is anything that is serious. Those people have really great merit with me in her conversion. I am sorry that our own clergy are not as zealously in earnest as they. They have really, my dear, if we may believe Aunt Eleanor, given a face of religion to subterranean colliers, tinners, and the most profligate of men, who hardly ever before heard either of the word or thing. But I am not turning Methodist, Harriet. No, you will not suspect me.

Now Emily, who is at present my visitor, had asked leave, before my brother's invitation (and was gone, my Jenny attending her), to visit her mother, who is not well. My brother was engaged to sup abroad—with some of the Danbys, I believe; I therefore made Lord and Lady L., cousin Reeves and cousin Reeves, and my aunt Grandison sup with me.

Emily was at home before me. Ah! the poor Emily. I'll tell you how it was between us.

"My lovely girl, my dear Emily," said I, "I have good news to tell you—about Miss Byron."

"Oh, thank God! And is she well? Pray, madam, tell me, tell me. I long to hear good news of my dear Miss Byron."

"Why, she will shortly be married, Emily."

"Married, madam!"

"Yes, my love. And to your guardian, child."

"To my guardian, madam. Well, but I hope so."

I then gave her a few particulars.

The dear girl tried to be joyful, and burst into tears.

"Why weeps my girl? Oh, fie. Are you sorry that Miss Byron will have your guardian? I thought you loved Miss Byron."

"So I do, madam, as my own self—and more than myself,

if possible. But the surprise, madam. Indeed I am glad. What makes me such a fool? Indeed I am glad. What ails me to cry, I wonder. It is what I wished, what I prayed for night and day. Dear madam, don't tell anybody. I am ashamed of myself."

The sweet April-faced girl then smiled through her tears.

I was charmed with her innocent sensibility; and if you are not, I shall think less of you than ever I did yet.

"Dear madam," said she, "permit me to withdraw for a few minutes; I must have my cry out, and I shall then be all joy and gladness."

She tripped away, and in half-an-hour came down to me with quite another face.

Lady L. was then with me. I had told her of the girl's emotion. "We are equally lovers of you, my dear," said I: "you need not be afraid of Lady L."

"And have you told, madam? Well, but I am not a hypocrite. What a strange thing! I, who have always been so much afraid of another lady for Miss Byron's sake, to be so oddly affected, as if I were sorry! Indeed I rejoice. But if you tell Miss Byron, she won't love me; she won't let me live with her and my guardian when she is happy and has made him so. And what shall I do then?—for I have set my heart upon it."

"Miss Byron, my dear, loves you so well that she will not be able to deny you anything your heart is set upon that is in her power to grant."

"God bless Miss Byron as I love her, and she will be the happiest of women! But what was the matter with me? Yet I believe I know—my poor mother had been crying sadly to me for her past unhappy life. She kissed me, as she said, for my father's sake; she had been the worst of wives to the best of husbands."

Again the good girl wept at her mother's remembered remorse. "My guar—my guardian's goodness, my mother

said, had awakened her to a sense of her wickedness. My

The sweet April-faced girl then smiled through her tears.

poor mother did not spare herself; and I was all sorrow, for

what could I say to her on such a subject? And all the way that I came home in the coach I did nothing but cry. I had but just dried my eyes, and tried to look cheerful, when you came in; and then, when you told me the good news, something struck me all at once—struck my very heart. I cannot account for it; I know not what to liken it to; and had I not burst into tears, I believe it would have been worse for me. But now I am myself; and if my poor mother could pacify her conscience, I should be a happy creature—because of Miss Byron's happiness. You look at each other, ladies; but if you think I should not, bid me begone from your presence for a false girl, and never see you more."

Now, Harriet, this emotion of Emily appears to me as a sort of phenomenon. Do you account for it as you will; but I am sure Emily is no hypocrite: she has no art; she believes what she says, that her sudden burst of tears was owing to her heart being affected by her mother's contrition; and I am also sure that she loves you above all the women in the world. Yet it is possible that the subtle thief, ycleped love, had got very near her heart, and just at the moment threw a dart into one angle of it, which was the something that struck her—all at once, as she phrased it—and made her find tears a relief. This I know, my dear, that we may be very differently affected by the same event, when judged of at a distance and near. If you don't already, or if you soon will not experience the truth of this observation in the great event before you, I am much mistaken.

But you see, Harriet, what joy this happy declaration of my brother, and the kind reception it has met with from Northamptonshire, has given us all. We will keep your secret, never fear, till all is over; and when it is, you shall let my brother know, from the letters we have had the favour of seeing, as much as we do. Till he does, excellent as he thinks you, he will not know one-half of your excellences, nor the merit which your love and your suspenses have made you with him.

But, with you, I long for the arrival of the next letters from Italy. God grant that Lady Clementina hold her resolution, now that she sees it is almost impossible for her to avoid marrying. If she should relent, what would be the consequence to my brother, to herself, to you! And how shall all we, his friends and yours, be affected! You think the lady is obliged, in duty to her parents, to marry. Lady L. and I are determined to be wise, and not give our opinions till the events which are yet in the bosom of fate, disclosing themselves, shall not leave us a possibility of being much mistaken. And yet, as to what the filial duty requires of her, we think she ought to marry. Meantime, I repeat, "God grant that Lady Clementina now hold her mind!"

. . . . . .

Lady L. sends up her name. Formality in her, surely. I will chide her. But here she comes. I love, Harriet, to write to the moment: that's a knack I had from you and my brother; and be sure continue it on every occasion—no pathetic without it.

"Your servant, Lady L."

"And your servant, Lady G. Writing? To whom?"

"To our Harriet."

"I will read your letter. Shall I?"

"Take it; but read it out, that I may know what I have written.—Now give it me again. I'll write down what you say to it, Lady L."

Lady L.—"I say you are a whimsical creature; but I don't like what you have last written."

Charlotte.—"Last written. 'Tis down. But why so, Lady L.?"

Lady L.—"How can you thus tease our beloved Byron with your conjectural evils?"

Charlotte.—"Have I supposed an impossibility? But 'tis down—'conjectural evils.'"

Lady L.—"If you are so whimsical, write, 'My dear Miss Byron.'"

Charlotte.—"'My dear Miss Byron'—'tis down."

Lady L. (looking over me).—"Do not let what this strange Charlotte has written grieve you."

Charlotte.—"Very well, Caroline—'grieve you.'"

Lady L.—"'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.'"

Charlotte.—"Well observed. Words of Scripture, I believe. Well—'evil thereof.'"

Lady L.—"Never, surely, was there such a creature as you, Charlotte."

Charlotte.—"That's down, too."

Lady L.—"Is that down?" (laughing). "That should not have been down; yet 'tis true."

Charlotte.—"'Yet 'tis true.' What's next?"

Lady L.—"Pish."

Charlotte.—"Pish."

Lady L.—"Well, now to Harriet. Clementina cannot alter her resolution, her objection still subsisting. Her love for my brother——"

Charlotte.—"Hold, Lady L. Too much at one time. 'Her love for my brother.'"

Lady L.—"On which her apprehensions that she shall not be able, if she be his wife——"

Charlotte.—"Not so much at once, I tell you; it is too much for my giddy head to remember—'if she be his wife——'"

Lady L.—"To adhere to her own religion, are founded——"

Charlotte.—"'Founded.'"

Lady L.—"Is a security for her adherence to a resolution so glorious to herself."

Charlotte.—"Well said, Lady L. May it be so, say and pray I. Any more, Lady L.?"

Lady L.—"Therefore——"

Charlotte.—"'Therefore——'"

Lady L.—"Regard not the perplexing Charlotte——"

Charlotte.—"I thank you, Caroline—'perplexing Charlotte.'"

Lady L.—"Is the advice of your ever affectionate sister, friend, and servant——"

Charlotte.—"So!—'friend and servant——'"

Lady L.—"Give me the pen——"

Charlotte.—"Take another." She did, and subscribed her name, "C. L."

With all my heart, Harriet. And here, after I have repeated my hearty wishes that nothing of this that I have so sagely apprehended may happen (for I desire not to be dubbed a witch so much at my own as well as at your expense), I will also subscribe that of your no less affectionate sister, friend, and servant, CHARLOTTE G.

My brother says he has sent you a letter, and your grandmamma another—full of grateful sensibilities both, I make no question; but no flight, or goddess-making absurdity, I dare say. You will give us copies, if you are as obliging as you used to be.

In LETTERS X.–XIII. (Vol. vi.) *the match evidently "appropinques an end," and the last of them is a formal letter from Mr. Deane to Sir Charles, detailing Miss Byron's fortune and expectations.*

LETTER XIV [vi]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON TO THOMAS DEANE, ESQ.

Thursday, October 5.

YOU know not, my dear Mr. Deane, upon what an unthankful man you would bestow your favours. I pretend not to

be above complying with the laudable customs of the world. Princes are examples to themselves. I have always, in things indifferent, been willing to take the world as I find it, and conform to it.

To say Miss Byron is a treasure in herself is what every man would say who has the honour to know her; yet I would not, in a vain ostentation, as the interest of a man and his wife is one, make a compliment to my affection by resigning or giving from her her natural right, especially as there is no one of her family that wants to be benefited by such gifts or resignations. But then I will not allow that any of her friends shall part with what is theirs, to supply—what? A supposed deficiency in her fortune. And by whom, as implied by you, supposed a deficiency?—by me; and it is left to me to confirm the imputation by my acceptance of the addition so generously as to the intention offered. Had I encumbrances on my estate which, undischarged, would involve in difficulties the woman I love, I know not what, for her sake, I might be tempted to do. But avarice only can induce a man who wants it not to accept of the bounty of a lady's friends, in their lifetime especially—when those friends are not either father or mother; one of them not a relation by blood, though he is by a nearer tie, that of love: and is not the fortune which the lady possesses in her own right an ample one?

I am as rich as I wish to be, my dear Mr. Deane. Were my income less, I would live within it; were it more, it would increase my duties. Permit me, my good sir, to ask, Has the man, as you call him (and a man, indeed, he appears to me to be), who intends to make so noble a present to a stranger, no relations, no friends who would have reason to think themselves unkindly treated if he gave from them such a large portion of his fortune?

I would not be thought romantic, neither aim I at ostentation. I would be as glad to follow as to set a good

example. Can I have a nobler, if Miss Byron honours me with her hand, than she, in that case, will give in preferring me to the Earl of D., a worthy man, with a much more splendid fortune than mine? Believe me, my dear Mr. Deane, it would, on an event so happy, be a restraint to my own joy before friends so kindly contributing to the increase of her fortune, lest they should imagine that their generosity on the occasion was one of the motives of my gratitude to her for her goodness to me.

You tell me that Miss Byron knows nothing of your proposals; I beseech you let her not know anything of them. Abase not so much in her eyes the man who presumes on her favour for the happiness of the rest of his life, by supposing (your supposition, sir, may have weight with her) he could value her the more for such an addition to her fortune. No, sir; let Miss Byron (satisfied with the consciousness of a worth which all the world acknowledges), in one of the most solemn events of her life, look round among her congratulating friends with that modest confidence which the sense of laying a high obligation on a favoured object gives to diffident merit, and which the receiving of favours from all her friends, as if to supply a supposed defective worth, must either abate, or, if it do not, make her think less of the interested man who could submit to owe such obligations.

If these friendly expostulations conclude against the offer of your generous friend, they equally do so against that of Mr. Selby. Were that gentleman and his lady the parents of Miss Byron, the case would be different; but Miss Byron's fortune is an ascertained one; and Mr. Selby has relations who stand in an equal degree of consanguinity to him, and who are all entitled, by their worthiness, to his favour. My best respects and thanks are, however, due; and I beg you will make my acknowledgments accordingly, as well to your worthy friend as to Mr. Selby.

I take the liberty to send you down the rent-roll of my

English estate. Determine for me as you please, my dearest Mr. Deane; only take this caution—affront me not a second time, but let the settlements be such as may be fully answerable to my fortune, although, in the common methods of calculation, it may exceed that of the dear lady. That you may be the better judge of this, you will find a brief particular of my Irish estate subjoined to the other.

I was intending, when I received yours, to do myself the honour of a visit to Selby House. I am impatient to throw myself at the feet of my dear Miss Byron, and to commend myself to the favour of Mr. and Mrs. Selby, and every one of a family I am prepared by their characters, as well as by their relation to Miss Byron, to revere and love; but as you seem to choose that the requisite preliminaries should be first adjusted by pen and ink, I submit, though with reluctance, to that course; but with the less, as I may in the interim receive letters from abroad, which, though they can now make no alteration with regard to the treaty so happily begun, may give me an opportunity of laying the whole state of my affairs before Miss Byron, by which means she will be enabled to form a judgment of them, and of the heart of, dear sir, her and your most affectionate, obliged, and faithful humble servant,

CHARLES GRANDISON.

LETTERS XV.–XX. (Vol. vi.) *contain details of Sir Charles taking the field in form and journeying to Selby House; and include one from Jeronymo, giving hopes that Clementina, piqued or warned by Sir Charles's example, will accept Belvedere.*

LETTER XXI [vi]

MISS BYRON TO LADY G.

Saturday, October 14.

MR. FENWICK has just now been telling us, from the account given him by that Greville, vile man! how the affair was between him and Sir Charles Grandison. Take it briefly as follows:—

About eight yesterday morning that audacious wretch went to the "George" at Northampton, and, after making his inquiries, demanded an audience of Sir Charles Grandison. Sir Charles was near dressed, and had ordered his chariot to be ready, with intent to visit us early.

He admitted of Mr. Greville's visit. Mr. Greville confesses that his own behaviour was peremptory (his word for insolent, I suppose). "I hear, sir," said he, "that you are come down into this county in order to carry off from us the richest jewel in it—I need not say whom. My name is Greville. I have long made my addresses to her, and have bound myself under a vow that, were a prince to be my competitor, I would dispute his title to her."

"You seem to be a princely man, sir," said Sir Charles, offended with his air and words, no doubt. "You need not, Mr. Greville, have told me your name: I have heard of you. What your pretensions are I know not. Your vow is nothing to me; I am master of my own actions, and shall not account to you or any man living for them."

"I presume, sir, you came down with the intention I have hinted at? I beg only your answer as to that. I beg it as a favour, gentleman to gentleman."

"The manner of your address to me, sir, is not such as will entitle you to an answer for your own sake. I will tell you, however, that I am come down to pay my devoirs

to Miss Byron. I hope for acceptance, and know not that I am to make allowance for the claim of any man on earth."

"Sir Charles Grandison, I know your character; I know your bravery. It is from that knowledge that I consider you as a fit man for me to talk to. I am not a Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, sir."

"I make no account of who or what you are, Mr. Greville. Your visit is not at this time a welcome one. I am going to breakfast with Miss Byron. I shall be here in the evening, and at leisure then to attend to anything you shall think yourself authorised to say to me, on this or any other subject."

"We may be overheard, sir. Shall I beg you to walk with me into the garden below? You are going to breakfast, you say, with Miss Byron. Dear Sir Charles Grandison, oblige me with an audience of five minutes only in the back-yard or garden."

"In the evening, Mr. Greville, command me anywhere, but I will not be broken in upon now."

"I will not leave you at liberty, Sir Charles, to make your visit where you are going till I am gratified with one five minutes' conference with you below."

"Excuse me then, Mr. Greville, that I give orders as if you were not here." Sir Charles rang. Up came one of his servants. "Is the chariot ready?"—"Almost ready" was the answer. "Make haste. Saunders may see his friends in this neighbourhood; he may stay with them till Monday. Frederick and you attend me."

He took out a letter and read in it, as he walked about the room, with great composure, not regarding Mr. Greville, who stood swelling, as he owned, at one of the windows, till the servant withdrew; and then he addressed himself to Sir Charles in language of reproach on this contemptuous treatment. "Mr. Greville," said Sir Charles, "you may be thankful perhaps that you are in my own apartment: this intrusion is a very ungentlemanly one."

Not regarding Mr. Greville, who stood swelling, as he owned, at one of the windows, till the servant withdrew.

Sir Charles was angry, and expressed impatience to be gone. Mr. Greville owned that he knew not how to contain himself, to see his rival with so many advantages in his person and air, dressed avowedly to attend the woman he had so long—shall I say, been troublesome to?—for I am sure he never had the shadow of countenance from me.

"I repeat my demand, Sir Charles. of a conference of five minutes below."

"You have no right to make any demand upon me, Mr. Greville; if you think you have, the evening will be time enough. But, even then, you must behave more like a gentleman than you have done hitherto, to entitle yourself to be considered as on a foot with me."

"Not on a foot with you, sir;" and he put his hand upon his sword. "A gentleman is on a foot with a prince, sir, in a point of honour."

"Go, then, and find out your prince, Mr. Greville. I am no prince, and you have as much reason to address yourself to the man you never saw as to me."

His servant just then showing himself and withdrawing, "Mr. Greville," added he, "I leave you in possession of this apartment. Your servant, sir. In the evening I shall be at your command."

"One word with you, Sir Charles—one word——"

"What would Mr. Greville?" turning back.

"Have you made proposals? Are your proposals accepted?"

"I repeat that you ought to have behaved differently, Mr. Greville, to be entitled to an answer to these questions."

"Answer me, however, sir: I beg it as a favour."

Sir Charles took out his watch. "After nine: I shall make them wait. But thus I answer you: I have made proposals, and, as I told you before, hope they will be accepted."

"Were you any other man in the world, sir, the man

before you might question your success with a woman whose difficulties are augmented by the obsequiousness of her admirers. But such a man as you would not have come down on a fool's errand. I love Miss Byron to distraction. I could not show my face in the country, and suffer any man out of it to carry away such a prize."

"Out of the country, Mr. Greville? What narrowness is this? But I pity you for your love of Miss Byron, and——"

"You pity me, sir," interrupted he. "I bear not such haughty tokens of superiority. Either give up your pretensions to Miss Byron, or make me sensible of it in the way of a gentleman."

"Mr. Greville, your servant;" and he went down.

The wretch followed him; and when they came to the yard, and Sir Charles was stepping into his chariot, he took his hand, several persons present. "We are observed, Sir Charles," whispered he. "Withdraw with me for a few moments. By the great God of heaven, you must not refuse me. I cannot bear that you should go thus triumphantly on the business you are going upon."

Sir Charles suffered himself to be led by the wretch; and when they were come to a private spot, Mr. Greville drew, and demanded Sir Charles to do the like, putting himself in a posture of defence.

Sir Charles put his hand on his sword, but drew it not. "Mr. Greville," said he, "know your own safety," and was turning from him, when the wretch swore he would admit of no alternative but his giving up his pretensions to Miss Byron.

His rage, as Mr. Fenwick describes it from himself, making him dangerous, Sir Charles drew. "I only defend myself," said he. "Greville, you keep no guard." He put by his pass with his sword; and, without making a push, closed in with him, twisted his sword out of his hand, and

pointing his own to his breast, "You see my power, sir. Take your life and your sword. But if you are either wise, or would be thought a man of honour, tempt not again your fate."

"And am I again master of my sword and unhurt? 'Tis generous. The evening, you say?"

"Still I say I will be yours in the evening, either at your own house or at my inn, but not as a duellist, sir: you know my principles."

"How can this be?" and he swore. "How was it done? Expose me not at Selby House. How the devil could this be? I expect you in the evening here."

He went off a back way. Sir Charles, instead of going directly into his chariot, went up to his apartment, wrote his billet to my aunt to excuse himself, finding it full late to get hither in time, and being somewhat discomposed in his temper, as he owned to us; and then he took an airing in his chariot till he came hither to dine.

But how should we have been alarmed had we known that Sir Charles declined supping here, in order to meet the violent man again at his inn! And how did we again blame ourselves for taking amiss his not supping with us!

Mr. Fenwick says that Mr. Greville got him to accompany him to the "George."

Sir Charles apologised, with great civility, to Mr. Greville for making him wait for him. Mr. Greville, had he been disposed for mischief, had no use of his right arm. It was strained by the twisting of his sword from it, and in a sling.

Sir Charles behaved to them both with great politeness, and Mr. Greville owned that he had acted nobly by him in returning his sword, even before his passion was calmed, and in not using his own. But it was some time, it seems, before he was brought into this temper. What a good deal contributed to it was Sir Charles's acquainting him that he had not given particulars at Selby House, or to anybody, of the

affray between them, but referred it to himself to give them as he should think proper. This forbearance he highly applauded, and was even thankful for it. "Fenwick shall, in confidence," said he, "report this matter to your honour, and my own mortification, as the truth requires, at Selby House. Let me not be hated by Miss Byron on this account. My passion gave me disadvantage. I will try to honour you, Sir Charles, but I must hate you if you succeed. One condition, however, I make—that you reconcile me to the Selbys and Miss Byron; and if you are likely to be successful, let me have the credit of reporting that it is by my consent."

They parted with civility, but not, it seems, till a late hour. Sir Charles, as Mr. Beauchamp and Dr. Bartlett have told us, was always happy in making by his equanimity, generosity, and forgivingness, fast friends of inveterate enemies. Thank God, the issue was not unhappy.

Mr. Fenwick says that the rencounter is very little guessed at or talked of (thank God for that, too!), and to those few who have inquired of Mr. Greville or Mr. Fenwick about it it has been denied; and now Greville, as Mr. Fenwick had done before, declares he will give out that he yields up all his hopes of Miss Byron, but says that Sir Charles Grandison, of whose address everybody already talks, is the only man in England to whom he could resign his pretensions.

He insists upon Sir Charles's dining with him to-morrow, Mr. Fenwick's also. Sir Charles is so desirous that the neighbourhood should conclude that he and these gentlemen are on a foot of good understanding, that he made the less scruple, for every one's sake, to accept of his invitation.

I am very, very thankful, my dearest Lady G., that the constant blusterings of this violent man, for so many months past, are so happily overblown.

Mr. Fenwick, as I guessed he would, made proposals to my aunt and me for my Lucy. Lucy has a fine fortune, but if she had not he should not have her: indeed, he is not

worthy of Lucy's mind. He must be related to me, he said; but I answered, "No man must call Lucy Selby his who can have any other motive for his wishes but her merit."

We hourly expect your brother. The new danger he has been in on my account endears him still more to us all. "How, how will you forbear," said my uncle, "throwing yourself into his arms at once, when he demands the result of our deliberations?" If I follow Mr. Deane's advice, I am to give him my hand at the first word; if Lucy's and Nancy's, he is not to ask me twice; if my grandmamma's and aunt's (they are always good), I am to act as occasion requires, and as my own confided-in prudence will suggest at the time, but to be sure not to be guilty of affectation. But still, my dear ladies, something sticks with me (and ought it not?) in relation to the noble Clementina.

In the next letter Greville makes certain proposals to stop scandal about his rencontre with Sir Charles with the following result.

LETTER XXIII [vi]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Sunday, noon, October 15.

We were told there would be a crowded church this morning, in expectation of seeing the new humble servant of Miss Byron attending her thither; for it is everywhere known that Sir Charles Grandison is come down to make his addresses to the young creature who is happy in every one's love and good wishes; and all is now said to have been settled between him and us by his noble sister, and Lord G., and Dr.

Bartlett, when they were with us. You see what credit you did us by your kind visit, my dear. And we are to be married. Oh, my dear Lady G., you cannot imagine how soon.

Many of the neighbourhood seemed disappointed when they saw me led in by my uncle, as Mr. Deane led my aunt, and Nancy and Lucy only attended by their brother. But it was not long before Mr. Greville, Mr. Fenwick, and Sir Charles entered, and went into the pew of the former, which is over against ours. Mr. Greville and Mr. Fenwick bowed low to us severally the moment they went into the pew, and to several others of the gentry.

Sir Charles had first other devoirs to pay: to false shame, you have said, he was always superior. I was delighted to see the example he set. He paid us his second compliments. I felt my face glow on the whispering that went round. I thought I read in every eye admiration of him, even through the sticks of some of the ladies' fans.

What a difference was there between the two men and him in their behaviour throughout both the service and sermon! Yet who ever beheld two of the three so decent, so attentive, so reverent, I may say, before? "Were all who call themselves gentlemen," thought I more than once, "like this, the world would yet be a good world."

Mr. Greville had his arm in a sling. He seemed highly delighted with his guest; so did Mr. Fenwick. When the sermon was ended, Mr. Greville held the pew door ready opened to attend our movements; and when we were in motion to go, he, taking officiously Sir Charles's hand, bent towards us. Sir Charles met us at our pew door and offered, with a profound respect, his hand to me.

This was equal to a public declaration. It took everybody's attention. He is not ashamed to avow in public what he thinks fit to own in private.

I was humbled more than exalted by the general notice.

Offered, with a profound respect, his hand to me.

Mr. Greville (bold, yet low man) made a motion as if he gave the hand that Sir Charles took, and, not speaking low (subtle as a serpent!), "My plaguy horse," said he to my aunt, looking at his sling, "knew not his master. I invite myself to tea with you, madam, in the afternoon. You will supply my lame arm, I hope, yourself."

There is no such thing as keeping private one's movements in a country town, if one would. One of our servants reported the general approbation. It is a pleasure, surely, my dear ladies, to be addressed to by a man of whom every one approves. What a poor figure must she make who gives way to a courtship from a man generally deemed unworthy of her! Such women, indeed, usually confess indirectly the folly, by carrying on the affair clandestinely.

Sunday evening.

Oh, my dear! I have been strangely disconcerted by means of Mr. Greville. He is a strange man. But I will lead to it in course.

We all went to church again in the afternoon. Everybody who knew Mr. Greville took it for a high piece of politeness in him to his guest that he came twice the same day to church. Sir Charles edified everybody by his cheerful piety. Are you not of opinion, my dear Lady G., that wickedness may be always put out of countenance by a person who has an established character for goodness, and who is not ashamed of doing his duty in the public eye? Methinks I could wish that all the profligates in the parish had their seats around that of a man who has fortitude enough to dare to be good. The text was a happy one to this purpose, the words of our Saviour, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels."

Sir Charles led my aunt to her coach, as Mr. Greville officiously, but properly for his views, did me. We found Mr. Fenwick at Selby House, talking to my grandmamma on the new subject. She dined with us; but not being very well, chose to retire to her devotions in my closet while we went to church, she having been at her own in the morning.

We all received Mr. Greville with civility. He affects to be thought a wit, you know, and a great joker. Some men cannot appear to advantage without making their friend a butt to shoot at. Fenwick and he tried to play upon each other, as usual. Sir Charles lent each his smile, and, whatever he thought of them, showed not a contempt of their great-boy snip-snap. But at last, my grandmamma and aunt engaged Sir Charles in a conversation which made the gentlemen so silent and so attentive that, had they not flashed a good deal at each other before, one might have thought them a little discreet.

Nobody took the least notice of what had passed between Mr. Greville and Sir Charles, till Mr. Greville touched upon the subject to me. He desired an audience of ten minutes, as he said; and upon his declaration that it was the last he would ever ask of me on the subject, and upon my grandmamma's saying, "Oblige Mr. Greville, my dear," I permitted him to draw me to the window.

His address was nearly in the following words, not speaking so low but every one might hear him, though he said aloud nobody must but me.

"I must account myself very unhappy, madam, in having never been able to incline you to show me favour. You may think me vain: I believe I am so; but I may take to myself the advantages and qualities which everybody allows me. I have an estate that will warrant my addresses to a woman of the first rank, and it is free and unencumbered. I am not an ill-natured man. I love my jest, 'tis true; but I love my friend. You good women generally do not like a man the

less for having something to mend in him. I could say a great deal more in my own behalf, but that Sir Charles Grandison" (looking at him) "quite eclipses me. Devil fetch me if I can tell how to think myself anything before him. I was always afraid of him. But when I heard he was gone abroad in pursuit of a former love, I thought I had another chance for it.

"Yet I was half afraid of Lord D. His mother would manage a Machiavel. He has a great estate—a title; he has good qualities for a nobleman. But when I found that you could so steadily refuse him, as well as me, 'There must be some man,' thought I, 'who is lord of her heart. Fenwick is as sad a dog as I: it cannot be he. Orme, poor soul!—she will not have such a milksop as that, neither——'"

"Mr. Orme, sir," interrupted I, and was going to praise him; but he said, "I will be heard out now. This is my dying speech: I will not be interrupted."

"Well then, sir," smiling, "come to your last words as soon as you can."

"I have told you before now, Miss Byron, that I will not bear your smiles; but now, smiles or frowns, I care not. I have no hopes left, and I am resolved to abuse you before I have done."

"Abuse me!—I hope not, sir."

"'Hope not!' What signify your hopes, who never gave me any? But hear me out. I shall say some things that will displease you; but more of another nature. I went on guessing who could be the happy man. 'That second Orme, Fowler, cannot be he,' thought I. 'Is it the newly arrived Beauchamp? He is a pretty fellow enough' (I had all your footsteps watched, as I told you I would). 'No,' answered I myself, 'she refused Lord D. and a whole tribe of us, before Beauchamp came to England. Who the devil can he be?' But when I heard that the dangerous man, whom I had thought gone abroad to his matrimonial destiny, was returned

unmarried; when I heard that he was actually coming northward, I began to be again afraid of him.

"Last Thursday night I had intelligence that he was seen at Dunstable in the morning in his way towards us. Then did my heart fail me. I had my spies about Selby House; I own it. What will not love and jealousy make a man do? I understood that your uncle and Mr. Deane, and a tribe of servants for train's sake, were set out to meet him. How I raved; how I cursed; how I swore! 'They will not, surely,' thought I, 'allow my rival at his first visit to take up his residence under the same roof with this charming witch.'"

"Witch, Mr. Greville!——"

"Witch—yes, witch. I called you ten thousand names in my rage, all as bad as that. 'Here, Jack, Will, Tom, George, get ready instantly each a dozen firebrands! I will light up Selby House for a bonfire to welcome the arrival of the invader of my freehold; and prongs and pitchforks shall be got ready to push every soul of the family back into the flames, that not one of it may escape my vengeance——'"

"Horrid man. I will hear no more."

"You must! You shall! It is my dying speech, I tell you——"

"A dying man should be penitent."

"To what purpose? I can have no hope. What is to be expected for or from a despairing man? But then I had intelligence brought me that my rival was not admitted to take up his abode with you. This saved Selby House. All my malice then was against the 'George' at Northampton. 'The keeper of it owes,' said I to myself, 'a hundred thousand obligations to me—yet to afford a retirement to my deadliest foe! But 'tis more manly,' thought I, 'in person to call this invader to account, if he pretends an interest at Selby House, and to force him to relinquish his pretensions to the queen of it, as I had made more than one gallant fellow do before by dint of bluster.'

"I slept not all that night. In the morning I made my visit at the inn. I pretend to know as well as any man what belongs to civility and good manners; but I knew the character of the man I had to deal with: I knew he was cool, yet resolute. My rage would not let me be civil, and if it would, I knew I must be rude to provoke him. I was rude; I was peremptory.

"Never were there such cold, such phlegmatic contempts passed upon man as he passed upon me. I came to a point with him. I heard he would not fight; I was resolved he should. I followed him to his chariot; I got him to a private place; but I had the devil and no man to deal with. He cautioned me, by way of insult as I took it, to keep a guard. I took his hint. I had better not, for he knew all the tricks of the weapon. He was in with me in a moment. I had no sword left me, and my life was at the mercy of his. He gave me up my own sword, cautioned me to regard my safety, put up his, withdrew. I found myself sensible of a damnable strain. I had no right arm. I slunk away like a thief. He mounted his triumphal car and pursued his course to the lady of Selby House. I went home, cursed, swore, fell down, and bit the earth."

My uncle looked impatient. Sir Charles seemed in suspense, but attentive. Mr. Greville proceeded:—

"I got Fenwick to go with me to attend him at night by appointment. Cripple as I was, I would have provoked him: he would not be provoked; and when I found that he had not exposed me at Selby House, when I remembered that I owed my sword and my life to his moderation, when I recollected his character—what he had done by Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, what Bagenhall had told me of him—'Why the plague,' thought I, 'should I (hopeless as I am of succeeding with my charming Byron, whether he lives or dies) set my face against such a man? He is incapable either of insult or arrogance. Let me (Fenwick advised a scheme), let me make him my friend to save my pride, and the devil take the rest, Harriet Byron and all——'"

"Wicked man! You were dying a thousand words ago — I am tired of you."

"You have not, madam, heard half my dying words yet. But I would not terrify you. Are you terrified?"

"Indeed I am."

Sir Charles motioned as if he would approach us, but kept his place, on my grandmamma's saying, "Let us bear his humour out. Mr. Greville was always particular."

"Terrified, madam! What is your being terrified to the sleepless nights, to the tormenting days you have given me? Cursing darkness, cursing light, and most myself! Oh, madam, with shut teeth, what a torment of torments have you been to me! Well, but now I will hasten to a conclusion, in mercy to you, who, however, never showed me any."

"I never was cruel, Mr. Greville."

"But you was, and most cruel, when most sweet-tempered. It was to that smiling obligingness that I owed my ruin. That gave me hope, that radiance of countenance, and that frozen heart. Oh, you are a dear deceiver. But I hasten to conclude my dying speech. Give me your hand: I will have it; I will not eat it, as once I had like to have done. And now, madam, hear my parting words. You will have the glory of giving to the best of men the best of wives. Let it not be long before you do, for the sake of many who will hope on till then. As your lover, I must hate him; as your husband, I will love him. He will, he must be kind, affectionate, grateful to you, and you will deserve all his tenderness. May you live (the ornaments of human nature as you are) to see your children's children, all promising to be as good, as worthy, as happy as yourselves; and full of years, full of honour, in one hour may you be translated to that heaven where only you can be more happy than you will be, if you are both as happy as I wish and expect you to be."

Tears dropped on my cheek at this unexpected blessing.

He still held my hand. "I will not, without your leave, madam—may I, before I part with it?" He looked at me as if for leave to kiss my hand, bowing his head upon it.

My heart was opened. "God bless you, Mr. Greville, as you have blessed me. Be a good man, and He will." I withdrew not my hand.

He kneeled on one knee, eagerly kissed my hand more than once. Tears were in his own eyes. He arose, hurried me to Sir Charles, and holding to him my then (through surprise) half-withdrawn hand—"Let me have the pride, the glory, Sir Charles Grandison, to quit this dear hand to yours. It is only to yours that I would quit it. 'Happy, happy, happy pair! None but the brave deserves the fair.'"

Sir Charles took my hand. "Let this precious present be mine," said he, kissing it, "with the declared assent of every one here," and presented me to my grandmamma and aunt. I was affrighted by the hurry the strange man had put me into.

"May I but live to see her yours, sir!" said my grandmamma in a kind of rapture.

The moment he had put my hand into Sir Charles's, he ran out of the room, with the utmost precipitation. He was gone, quite gone, when he came to be inquired after; and everybody was uneasy for him, till we were told by one of the servants that he took from the window of the outward parlour his hat and sword; and by another, that he met him, his servant after him, hurrying away, and even sobbing as he flew. Was there ever so strange a man?

Don't you pity Mr. Greville, my dear?

Sir Charles was generously uneasy for him.

"Mr. Greville," said Lucy (who had always charity for him), "has frequently surprised us with his particularities; but I hope, from the last part of his behaviour, that he is not the freethinking man he sometimes affects to be thought. I flatter myself that Sir Charles had a righter notion of him than we, in what he said of him yesterday."

Sir Charles waited on my grandmamma home; so we had him not to supper. We are all to dine with her to-morrow. Your brother, you may suppose, will be a principal guest.

Monday morning, October 16.

I have a letter from my Emily, by which I find she is with you, though she has not dated it. You were very kind in showing the dear girl the overflowings of my heart in her favour. She is all grateful love and goodness. I will soon write to her, to repeat my assurances that my whole power shall always be exerted to do her pleasure; but you must tell her, as from yourself, that she must have patience. I cannot ask her guardian such a question as she puts, as to her living with me, till I am likely to succeed. Would the sweet girl have me make a request to him that shall show him I am supposing myself to be his before I am so? We are not come so far on our journey by several stages. And yet, from what he intimated last night, as he waited on my grandmamma to Shirley Manor, I find that his expectations are forwarder than it will be possible for me to answer; and I must, without intending the least affectation, for common decorum's sake, take the management of this point upon myself. For, my dear, we are every one of us here so much in love with him that the moment he should declare his wishes they would be as ready to urge me to oblige him, were he even to limit me but to two or three days, as if they were afraid he would not repeat his request.

I have a letter from Mr. Beauchamp. He writes that there are no hopes of Sir Harry's recovery. I am very sorry for it. Mr. Beauchamp does me great honour to write to me to give him consolation. His is a charming letter. So full of filial piety! Excellent young man! He breathes in it the true spirit of his friend.

Sir Charles and his Beauchamp and Dr. Bartlett correspond,

I presume, as usual. What would I give to see all Sir Charles writes that relates to us!

Mr. Fenwick just now tells us that Mr. Greville is not well and keeps his chamber. He has my cordial wishes for his health. His last behaviour to me appears, the more I think of it, more strange from such a man. I expected not that he would conclude with such generous wishes.

Nancy, who does not love him, compares him to the wicked prophet of old, blessing where he was expected to curse,[1] and says it was such an overstrain of generosity from him that it might well overset him.

Did you think that our meek Nancy could have said so severe a thing? But meekness offended (as she once was by him) has an excellent memory, and can be bitter.

We are preparing now to go to Shirley Manor. Our cousins Patty and Kitty Holles will be there at dinner. They have been for a few weeks past at their aunt's, near Daventry. They are impatient to see Sir Charles. Adieu, my dearest ladies! Continue to love your

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXIV. *gives an account of a day at Shirley Manor.*

LETTER XXV [vi]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

THRAPSTON, *Tuesday evening, October* 17.

WE passed several hours at Boughton,[2] and arrived here in the afternoon. Mr. Deane insisted that we should stop at

[1] Balaam (Num. xxii.) *et seq.*

[2] The seat of the late Duke of Montagu.

a nephew's of his in the neighbourhood of this town. The young gentleman met us at Oundle, and conducted us to his house. I have got such a habit of scribbling that I cannot forbear applying to my pen at every opportunity: the less wonder when I have your brother for my subject, and the two beloved sisters of that brother to write to.

It would be almost impertinent to praise a man for his horsemanship who, in his early youth, was so noted for the performance of all his exercises, that his father and General W. thought of the military life for him. Ease and unaffected dignity distinguish him in all his accomplishments. "Bless me, madam," said Lucy to my aunt, on more occasions than one, "this man is everything."

Shall I own that I am retired to my pen just now, from a very bad motive? Anger. I am in my heart even peevish with all my friends, for clustering so about Sir Charles that he can hardly obtain a moment (which he seems to seek for, too) to talk with me alone. My uncle (he does dote upon him) always inconsiderately stands in his way; and can I say to a man so very inclinable to raillery that he should allow me more, and himself less of Sir Charles's conversation? I wonder my aunt does not give my uncle a hint. But she loves Sir Charles's company as well as my uncle.

This, however, is nothing to the distress my uncle gave me at dinner this day. Sir Charles was observing upon the disposition of one part of the gardens at Boughton, "that art was to be but the handmaid of nature." "I have heard, Sir Charles," said my uncle, "that you have made that a rule with you at Grandison Hall. With what pleasure should I make a visit there to you and my niece."

He stopped. He needed not: he might have said anything after this. Sir Charles looked as if concerned for me, yet said that would be a joyful visit to him. My aunt was vexed for my sake; Lucy gave my uncle such a look.

My uncle afterwards indeed apologised to me. "Ads-heart,

I was a little blunt, I believe. But what a duce need there be these niceties observed when you are sure? I am sorry, however, but it would out; yet you, Harriet, made it worse by looking so silly."

. . . . . .

What, Lady G., can I do with this dear man?—my uncle, I mean. He has been just making a proposal to me, as he calls it—and with such honest looks of forecast and wisdom. "Look ye, Harriet: I shall be always blundering about your scrupulosities. I am come to propose something to you that will put it out of my power to make mistakes. I beg of you and your aunt to allow me to enter with Sir Charles into a certain subject; and this not for your sake—I know you won't allow of that—but for the ease of Sir Charles's own heart. Gratitude is my motive, and ought to be yours. I am sure he loves the very ground you tread upon."

I besought him, for every sake dear to himself, not to interfere in the matter, but to leave these subjects to my grandmamma. "Consider, sir," said I, "consider how very lately the first personal declaration was made."

"I do, I will consider everything; but there is danger between the cup and the lip."

"Dear sir!" (my hands and eyes lifted up) was all the answer I could make. He went from me hastily, muttering good-naturedly against femalities.

DEANE'S GROVE, *Wednesday, October* 18.

Mr. Deane's pretty box you have seen. Sir Charles is pleased with it. We looked in at Fotheringay Castle,[1] Milton,[2] &c. Mr. Charles Deane, a very obliging and sensible young gentleman, attended his uncle all the way.

What charming descriptions of fine houses and curiosities

[1] The prison of Mary Queen of Scots.
[2] The seat of Earl Fitzwilliam.

abroad did Sir Charles give us when we stopped to bait or to view the pictures, furniture, gardens of the houses we saw!

In every place, on every occasion, on the road or when we alighted or put up, he showed himself so considerate, so gallant, so courteous to all who approached him, and so charitable—yet not indiscriminately to everybody that asked him; but he was bountiful indeed, on representation of the misery of two honest families. Beggars born, or those who make begging a trade, if in health and not lame or blind, have seldom, it seems, any share in his munificence; but persons fallen from competence, and such as struggle with some instant distress, or have large families which they have not ability to maintain—these, and such as these, are the objects of his bounty. Richard Saunders, who is sometimes his almoner, told my Sally that he never goes out but somebody is the better for him, and that his manner of bestowing his charity is such as, together with the poor people's blessings and prayers for him, often draws tears from his eyes.

. . . . . .

I have overheard a dialogue that has just now passed between my uncle and aunt. There is but a thin partition between the room they were in and mine; and he spoke loud, my aunt not low, yet earnest only, not angry. He had been proposing to her, as he had done to me, to enter into a certain subject in pity to Sir Charles: none had he for his poor niece. No doubt but he thought he was obliging me, and that my objection was only owing to femality, as he calls it—a word I don't like. I never heard it from Sir Charles.

My aunt was not at all pleased with his motion. She wished, as I had done, that he would not interfere in these nice matters. He took offence at the exclusion, because of the word "nice." She said "he was too precipitating a great deal; she did not doubt but Sir Charles would be full early in letting me know his expectations."

She spoke more decisively than she is used to do. He

cannot bear her chidings, though ever so gentle. I need not tell you that he both loves and reveres her; but, as one of the lords of the creation, is apt to be jealous of his prerogatives. You used to be diverted with his honest particularities.

"What an ignoramus you women and girls make of me, Dame Selby," said he. "I know nothing of the world, nor of men and women—that's certain. I am always to be documented by you and your minxes. But the duce take your niceties: you don't, you can't, poor souls as you are, distinguish men. You must all of you go on in one rigmarole way, in one beaten track. Who the duce would have thought it needful, when a girl and we all were wishing till our very hearts were bursting for this man, when he was not in his own power, that you must now come with your hums, and your haws, and the whole circumroundabouts of female nonsense, to stave off the point your hearts and souls are set upon? I remember, Dame Selby, though so long ago, how you treated your future lord and master, when you pranked it as lady and mistress. You vexed my very soul—I can tell you that. And often and often when I left you, I swore bitterly that I never would come again as a lover—though I was a poor forsworn wretch. God forgive me!"

"My dear Mr. Selby, you should not remember past things. You had very odd ways—I was afraid for a good while of venturing with you at all."

"Now, Dame Selby, I have you at a why-not or I never had; though, by the way, your unevenness increased my oddness. But what oddness is in Sir Charles Grandison? If he is not even, neither you nor I were ever odd. What reason is there for him to run the female gauntlope? I pity the excellent man, remembering how I was formerly vexed myself. I hate this shilly-shally fooling, this know your mind and not know your mind nonsense. As I hope to live and breathe, I'll—I'll—I'll blow you all up without gunpowder or oatmeal, if an honest gentleman is thus to be fooled with,

and after such a letter too from his friend Jeronymo, in the names of the whole family. Lady G. for my money!" (Ah! thought I, Lady G. gives better advice than she even wishes to know how to take.) "I like her notion of parallel lines. Sir Charles Grandison is none of your gew-gaw whip-jacks that you know not where to have. But I tell you, Dame Selby, that neither you nor your niece know how, with your fine souls and fine sense, to go out of the common femality path, when you get a man into your gin, however superior he is to common infanglements and low chicanery, and dull and cold forms, as Sir Charles properly called them, in his address to the little pug's face. (I do love her with all her pretty ape's tricks, for what are you all but, right or wrong, apes of one another?) And do you think, with all your wisdom, he sees not through you? He does; and, as a wise man, must despise you all, with your femalities and forsooths."

"No femality, Mr. Selby, is designed. No——"

"I am impatient, Dame Selby, light of my eye, and dear to my heart and soul as you are; I will take my own way in this. I have no mind that the two dearest creatures in the world to me should render themselves despisable in the eyes of a man they want to think highly of them. And here if I put in and say but a wry word, as you think it, I am to be called to account."

"My dear, did you not begin the subject?" said my aunt.

"I am to be closeted and to be documentised," proceeded he. "Not another word, Dame Selby: I am not in humour to bear them; I will take my own way—and that's enough."

And then, I suppose, he stuck his hands in his sides, as he does when he is good-humouredly angry; and my aunt at such times gives up till a more convenient opportunity, and then she always carries her point (because she is always reasonable), for which he calls her a Parthian woman.

I heard her say, as he stalked out royally, repeating that

he would take his own way, "I say no more, Mr. Selby; Only consider——"

"Oy, and let Harriet consider, and do you consider, Dame Selby. Sir Charles Grandison is not a common man."

I did not let my aunt know that I heard this speech of my uncle; she only said to me, when she saw me, "I have had a little debate with your uncle: we must do as well as we can with him, my dear. He means well."

Thursday morning, October 19.

After breakfast, first one then another dropped away, and left only Sir Charles and me together. Lucy was the last that went; and the moment she was withdrawn, while I was thinking to retire to dress, he placed himself by me. "Think me not abrupt, my dearest Miss Byron," said he, "that I take almost the only opportunity which has offered of entering upon a subject that is next my heart."

I found my face glow. I was silent.

"You have given me hope, madam; all your friends encourage that hope. I love, I revere your friends. What I have now to petition for is a confirmation of the hope I have presumed upon. Can you, madam (the female delicacy is more delicate than that of man can be), unequally as you may think yourself circumstanced with a man who owns that once he could have devoted himself to another lady—can you say that the man before you is the man whom you can, whom you do prefer to any other?"

He stopped, expecting my answer.

After some hesitations, "I have been accustomed, sir," said I, "by those friends whom you so deservedly value, to speak nothing but the simplest truth. In an article of this moment, I should be inexcusable if——"

I stopped. His eyes were fixed upon my face. For my life I could not speak, yet wished to be able to speak.

"If—if what, madam?"—and he snatched my hand,

"Sir, I can—I do."

bowed his face upon it, held it there, not looking up to mine. I could then speak. "If thus urged, and by Sir

Charles Grandison—I did not speak my heart—I answer—sir, I can—I do."

I wanted, I thought, just then to shrink into myself.

He kissed my hand with fervour, dropped down on one knee, again kissed it. "You have laid me, madam, under everlasting obligation; and will you permit me, before I rise—loveliest of women, will you permit me to beg an early day? I have many affairs on my hands, many more in design, now I am come, as I hope, to settle in my native country for the rest of my life. My chief glory will be to behave commendably in the private life. I wish not to be a public man, and it must be a very particular call for the service of my king and country united that shall draw me out into public notice. Make me, madam, soon the happy husband I hope to be. I prescribe not to you the time; but you are above empty forms. May I presume to hope it will be before the end of a month to come?"

He had forgot himself. He said he would not prescribe to me.

After some involuntary hesitations, "I am afraid of nothing so much just now, sir," said I, "as appearing to a man of your honour and penetration affected. Rise, sir, I beseech you: I cannot bear——"

"I will, madam, and rise as well as kneel to thank you, when you have answered a question so very important to my happiness."

Before I could resume, "Only believe me, madam," said he, "that my urgency is not the insolent urgency of one who imagines a lady will receive as a compliment his impatience. And if you have no scruple that you think of high importance, add, I beseech you, to the obligation you have laid him under to your condescending goodness (and add with that frankness of heart which has distinguished you in my eyes above all women) the very high one of an early day."

I looked down; I could not look up—I was afraid of being thought affected. Yet how could I so soon think of obliging him?

He proceeded. "You are silent, madam. Propitious be your silence. Allow me to inquire of your aunt, for your kind, your condescending acquiescence. I will not now urge you further: I will be all hope."

"Let me say, sir, that I must not be precipitated. These are very early days."

Much more was in my mind to say, but I hesitated—I could not speak. Surely, my dear ladies, it was too early an urgency. And can a woman be wholly unobservant of custom and the laws of her sex? Something is due to the fashion in our dress, however absurd that dress might have appeared in the last age (as theirs do to us), or may in the next; and shall not those customs which have their foundation in modesty and are characteristic of the gentler sex, be entitled to excuse and more than excuse?

He saw my confusion. "Let me not, my dearest life, distress you," said he. "Beautiful as your emotion is, I cannot enjoy it if it give you pain. Yet is the question so important to me, so much is my heart concerned in the favourable answer I hope for from your goodness, that I must not let this opportunity slip, except it be your pleasure that I attend your determination from Mrs. Selby's mouth. Yet that I choose not neither, because I presume for more favour from your own than you will, on cold deliberation, allow your aunt to show me. Love will plead for its faithful votary in a single breast, when consultation on the supposed fit and unfit, the object absent, will produce delay. But I will retire for two moments. You shall be my prisoner meantime. Not a soul shall come in to interrupt us, unless it be at your call. I will return and receive your determination; and if that be the fixing of my happy day, how will you rejoice me!"

While I was debating within myself whether I should be

angry or pleased, he returned, and found me walking about the room. "Soul of my hope," said he, taking with reverence my hand, "I now presume that you can, that you will oblige me."

"You have given me no time, sir; but let me request that you will not expect an answer in relation to the early day you so early ask for till after the receipt of your next letters from Italy. You see how the admirable lady is urged, how reluctantly she has given them but distant hopes of complying with their wishes. I should be glad to wait for the next letters—for those, at least, which will be an answer to yours, acquainting them that there is a woman with whom you think you could be happy. I am earnest in this request, sir. Think it not owing to affectation."

"I acquiesce, madam. The answer to those letters will soon be here. It will, indeed, be some time before I can receive a reply to that I wrote in answer to Jeronymo's last letter. I impute not affectation to my dearest Miss Byron. I can easily comprehend your motive: it is a generous one. But it befits me to say that the next letters from Italy, whatever may be their contents, can now make no alteration on my part. Have I not declared myself to your friends, to you, and to the world?"

"Indeed, sir, they may make an alteration on mine, highly as I think of the honour Sir Charles Grandison does me by his good opinion. For, pardon me, should the most excellent of women think of resuming a place in your heart——"

"Let me interrupt you, madam. It cannot be that Lady Clementina, proceeding, as she has done, on motives of piety, zealous in her religion, and all her relations now earnest in another man's favour, can alter her mind. I should not have acted with justice, with gratitude to her, had I not tried her steadfastness by every way I could devise; nor in justice to both ladies would I allow myself to apply for your favour

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till I had her resolution confirmed to me under her own hand after my arrival in England. But were it now possible that she should vary, and were you, madam, to hold your determination in my favour suspended, the consequence would be this: I should never, while that suspense lasted, be the husband of any woman on earth."

"I hope, sir, you will not be displeased. I did not think you would so soon be so very earnest. But this, sir, I say, Let me have reason to think that my happiness will not be the misfortune of a more excellent woman, and it shall be my endeavour to make the man happy who only can make me so."

He clasped me in his arms with an ardour that displeased me not—on reflection, but at the time startled me. He then thanked me again on one knee. I held out the hand he held not in his with intent to raise him, for I could not speak. He received it as a token of favour, kissed it with ardour, arose, again pressed my cheek with his lips. I was too much surprised to repulse him with anger. But was he not too free? Am I a prude, my dear? In the odious sense of the abused word I am sure I am not; but in the best sense, as derived from prudence, and used in opposition to a word that denotes a worse character, I own myself one of those who would wish to restore it to its natural respectable signification, for the sake of virtue, which, as Sir Charles himself once hinted, is in danger of suffering by the abuse of it, as religion once did by that of the word "Puritan."

Sir Charles, on my making towards the door that led to the stairs, withdrew with such a grace as showed he was capable of recollection.

Again I ask, Was he not too free? I will tell you how I judge that he was. When I came to conclude my narrative to my aunt and Lucy of all that passed between him and me, I blushed, and could not tell them how free he was. Yet you see, ladies, that I can write it to you two.

Sir Charles, my uncle, and Mr. Deane took a little walk, and returned just as dinner was ready. My uncle took me aside, and whispered to me, "I am glad at my heart and soul the ice is broken. This is the man of true spirit—ads-heart, Harriet, you will be Lady Grandison in a fortnight at furthest, I hope. You have had a charming confabulation, I doubt not. I can guess you have, by Sir Charles's declaring himself more and more delighted with you. And he owns that he put the question to you. Hay, Harriet!" smiling in my face.

Every one's eyes were upon me. Sir Charles, I believe, saw me look as if I were apprehensive of my uncle's raillery. He came up to us. "My dear Miss Byron," said he, in my uncle's hearing, "I have owned to Mr. Selby the request I presumed to make you. I am afraid that he, as well as you, think me too bold and forward. If, madam, you do, I ask your pardon; my hopes shall always be controlled by your pleasure."

This made my uncle complaisant to me. I was reassured; I was pleased to be so seasonably relieved.

Friday morning, October 20.

You must not, my dear ladies, expect me to be so very minute; if I am, must I not lose a hundred charming conversations? One, however, I will give you a little particularly.

Your brother desired leave to attend me in my dressing-room. But how can I attempt to describe his air, his manner, or repeat the thousand agreeable things he said? Insensibly he fell into talking of future schemes in a way that punctilio itself could not be displeased with.

He had been telling me that our dear Mr. Deane, having been affected by his last indisposition, had desired my uncle, my aunt, and him to permit him to lay before them the state of his affairs, and the kind things he intended to do by his

Tears again strayed down my cheeks. Why did I weep?

"Delicate sensibility!" said he. He clasped his arms about me, but instantly withdrew them, as if recollecting himself. "Pardon me, madam. Admiration will sometimes mingle with reverence. I must express my gratitude as a man. May my happy day be not far distant, that I may have no bound to my joy." He took my hand, and again pressed it with his lips. "My heart, madam," said he, "is in your hand: you cannot but treat it graciously."

Just then came in my Nancy (why came she in?) with the general expectation of us to breakfast. Breakfast! "What," thought I, "is breakfast!" The world, my Charlotte—but hush! Withdraw, fond heart, from my pen. Can the dearest friend allow for the acknowledgment of impulses so fervent, and which, writing to the moment, as I may say, the moment only can justify revealing?

He led me downstairs and to my seat, with an air so noble, yet so tender. My aunt, my Lucy, everybody—looked at me. My eyes betrayed my hardly conquered emotion.

Sir Charles's looks and behaviour were so respectful that every one addressed me as a person of increased consequence. Do you think, Lady G., that Lord G.'s and Lord L.'s respectful behaviour to their wives do not as much credit to their own hearts as to their ladies? How happy are you that you have recollected yourself, and now encourage not others by your example to make a jest of a husband's love! Will you forgive me the recollection for the sake of the joy I have in the reformation?

. . . . . .

I have read this letter just now to my aunt and Lucy, all except this last saucy hint to you. They clasped me each in their arms, and said they admired him and were pleased with me. Instruct me, my dear ladies, how to behave in such a manner as may show my gratitude (I had almost said

my love); yet not go so very far as to leave the day, the hour, everything to his determination!

But, on reading to my aunt and Lucy what I had written, I was ashamed to find that, when he was enumerating the friends he hoped to have near him or about him, I had forgot to remind him of my Emily. Ungrateful Harriet! But don't tell her that I was so absorbed in self, and that the conversation was so interesting that my heart was more of a passive than an active machine at the time. I will soon find or make an occasion to be her solicitress. You once thought that Emily, for her own sake, should not live with us; but her heart is set upon it. Dear creature! I love her; I will soothe her; I will take her to my bosom. I will, by my sisterly compassion, entitle myself to all her confidence: she shall have all mine. Nor shall her guardian suspect her. I will be as faithful to her secret as you and Lady L. were (thankfully I remember it!) to mine. Do you think, my dear, that if Lady Clementina (I bow to her merit whenever I name her to myself) had had such a true, such a soothing friend, to whom she could have revealed the secret that oppressed her noble heart while her passion was young, it would have been attended with such a deprivation of her reason as made unhappy all who had the honour of being related to her?

. . . . . .

Oh, my dear Lady G., I am undone. Emily is undone; we are all undone. I am afraid so. My intolerable carelessness! I will run away from him. I cannot look him in the face. But I am most, most of all, concerned for my Emily.

Walking in the garden with Lucy, I dropped the last sheet, marked 6, of this letter.[1]

I missed it not till my aunt this minute told me that Sir

[1] Beginning, "Why did I weep?" p. 170.

Charles, crossing the walk which I had just before quitted, stooped and took up a paper. Immediately my heart misgave me. I took out my letter. I thought I had it all; but the fatal, fatal sixth sheet is wanting. That must be what he stooped for and took up. What shall I do? Sweet Emily, now will he never suffer you to live with him. All my own heart laid open too! Such prattling also! I cannot look him in the face. How shall I do to get away to Shirley Manor, and hide myself in the indulgent bosom of my grandmamma? What affectation after this will it be to refuse him his day! But he demands audience of me. Could anything (oh! the dear Emily) have happened more mortifying to your

HARRIET BYRON?

LETTER XXVI [vi]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Friday afternoon, October 20.

I WAS all confusion when he, looking as unconscious as he used to do, entered my dressing-room. I turned my face from him. He seemed surprised at my concern. "Miss Byron, I hope, is well. Has anything disturbed you, madam?"

"My paper, my paper! You took it up. For the world I would not. The poor Emily! Give it me; give it me;" and I burst into tears.

Was there ever such a fool? What business had I to name Emily?

He took it out of his pocket. "I came to give it to you," putting it into my hand. "I saw it was your writing, madam; I folded it up immediately. It has not been unfolded since. Not a single sentence did I permit myself to read."

"Are you sure, sir, you have not read it, nor any part of it?"

"Upon my honour I have not."

I cleared up at once. "A blessed reward," thought I, "for denying my own curiosity, when pressed by my Charlotte to read a letter clandestinely obtained."

"A thousand, thousand thanks to you, sir, for not giving way to your curiosity. I should have been miserable perhaps for months had you read that paper."

"You now indeed raise my curiosity, madam. Perhaps your generosity will permit you to gratify it, though I should not have forgiven myself had I taken advantage of such an accident."

"I will tell you the contents of some parts of it, sir."

"Those which relate to my Emily, if you please, madam. 'The poor Emily,' you said. You have alarmed me. Perhaps I am not to be quite happy. What of poor Emily? Has the girl been imprudent? Has she already—what of the poor Emily?"

And his face glowed with impatience.

"No harm, sir, of Emily. Only a request of the dear girl." (What better use could I have made of my fright, Lady G.?) "But the manner of my mentioning it I would not for the world you should have seen."

"No harm, you say. I was afraid by your concern for her. But can you love her as well as ever? If you can, Emily must still be good."

"I can, I do."

"What then, dear madam, of poor Emily? Why poor Emily?"

"I will tell you. The dear girl makes it her request that I will procure of you one favour for her. Her heart is set upon it."

"If Emily continue good she shall only signify her wish and I will comply. If I am not a father to her, is she not fatherless?"

"Allow me, sir, to call you kind, good, humane."

"What I want of those qualities, Miss Byron will teach me by her example. But what would my Emily?"

"She would live with her guardian, sir."

"With me, madam? And with you, madam?—Tell me, own to me, madam—and with you?"

"That is her wish."

"And does my beloved Miss Byron think it a right wish to be granted? Will she be the instructing friend, the exemplary sister, now in that time of the dear girl's life when the eye rather than the judgment is usually the director of a young woman's affections?"

"I love the sweet innocent. I could wish her to be always with me."

"Obliging goodness! Then is one of my cares over. A young woman from fourteen to twenty is often a troublesome charge upon a friendly heart. I could not have asked this favour of you. You rejoice me by mentioning it. Shall I write a letter in your name to Emily?"

"There, sir, are pen, ink, and paper."

"In your name, madam?"

I bowed assent, mistrusting nothing.

He wrote, and, doubling down, showed me only these words—"My dear Miss Jervois, I have obtained for you the desired favour. Will you not continue to be as good as you have hitherto been? That is all which is required of my Emily by her ever affectionate——"

I instantly wrote, "Harriet Byron." "But, sir, what have you doubled down?"

"Charming confidence! What must he be who could attempt to abuse it? Read, madam, what you have signed."

I did. How my heart throbbed. "And could Sir Charles Grandison," said I, "thus intend to deceive? Could Sir Charles Grandison be such a plotter? Thank God you are not a bad man."

After the words, "I have obtained for you the desired favour," followed these :—

"You must be very good. You must resolve to give me nothing but joy—joy equal to the love I have for you, and to the sacrifice I have made to oblige you. Go down, my love, as soon as you can, to Grandison Hall: I shall then have one of the sisters of my heart there to receive me. If you are there in less than a fortnight, I will endeavour to be with you in a fortnight after. I sacrifice at least another fortnight's punctilio to oblige you; and will you not continue to be as good as you have hitherto been? That is all which is required of my Emily, by, &c."

"Give me the paper, sir," holding out my hand for it.

"Have I forfeited my character with you, madam?"—holding it back, with an air of respectful gaiety.

"I must consider, sir, before I give you an answer."

"If I have, why should I not send it away—and, as Miss Byron cannot deny her handwriting, hope to receive the benefit of the supposed deceit?—especially as it will answer so many good ends; for instance, your own wishes in Emily's favour, as it will increase your own power of obliging, and be a means of accelerating the happiness of a man whose principal joy will be in making you happy."

Was it not a pretty piece of deceit, Lady G.? Shall I own that my heart was more inclined to reward than punish him for it? And really, for a moment I thought of the impracticableness of complying with the request, as if I was seriously pondering upon it, and was sorry it was not practicable. To get away from my dear Mr. Deane, thought I, who will not be in haste to part with us; some female bustlings to be got over on our return to Selby House; proposal renewed, and a little paraded with (why, Lady G., did you tell me that our sex is a foolish sex?) the preparation; the ceremony, the awful ceremony; the parting with the dearest and most indulgent friends that ever young creature was

"Give me the paper, sir," holding out my hand for it.

blessed with; and to be at Grandison Hall—all within one month. Was there ever so precipitating a man?

I believe, verily, that I appeared to him as if I were considering of it, for he took advantage of my silence, and urged me to permit him to send away to Emily what he had written, and offered to give reasons for his urgency. "Written as it is," said he, "by me, and signed by you, how will the dear girl rejoice at the consent of both under our hands! And will she not take the caution given her in it from me as kindly as she will your mediation in her favour?"

"Sure, sir," said I, "you expect not a serious answer?" Upon his honour he did. "How, sir? Ought you not rather to be thankful, if I forgive you for letting me see that Sir Charles Grandison was capable of such an artifice, though but in jest, and for his reflection upon me, and perhaps meant on our sex, as if decorum were but punctilio? I beg my Lucy's pardon," added I, "for being half angry with her when she called you a designer."

"My dearest creature," said he, "I am a designer. Who, to accelerate a happiness on which that of his whole life depends, would not be innocently so? I am in this instance selfish; but I glory in my selfishness, because I am determined, if power be lent me, that every one within the circle of our acquaintance shall have reason to congratulate you as one of the happiest of women."

"Till this artifice, sir, showed me what you could do, were you not a man of the strictest honour, I had nothing but affiance in you. Give me the paper, sir, and for your own sake I will destroy it, that it may not furnish me with an argument that there is not one man in the world who is to be implicitly confided in by a woman."

"Take it, madam" (presenting it to me); "destroy it not, however, till you have exposed me, as such a breach of confidence deserves, to your aunt, your Lucy—to your uncle Selby and Mr. Deane, if you please."

"Ah! sir, you know your advantages. I will not in this case refer to them; I could sooner rely, dearly as they love their Harriet, on Sir Charles Grandison's justice than on their favour, in any debate that should happen between him and me."

"There never, madam, except in the case before us, can be room for a reference; your prudence and my gratitude must secure us both. Even now, impatient as I am to call you mine, which makes me willing to lay hold of every opportunity to urge you for an early day, I will endeavour to subdue that impatience and submit to your will. Yet let me say that, if I did not think your heart one of the most laudably unreserved, yet truly delicate, that woman ever boasted, and your prudence equal, you would not have found me so acquiescent a lover, early as you suppose my urgency for the happy day."

"And is it not early, sir? Can Sir Charles Grandison think me punctilious? But you will permit me to write to Miss Jervois myself, and acquaint her with her granted wish, if——"

"If! No if, madam. Whatever you think right to be done in this case, that do. Emily will be more particularly your ward than mine, if you condescend to take the trust upon you."

You will be pleased, dear Lady G., to acquaint Emily with the grant of her wish. She will rejoice. God give the dear creature reason for joy, and then I shall have double pleasure in having contributed to her obtaining of it. But on second thoughts I will write to her myself, for I allow not that she shall see or hear read everything I write to you.

Shall I own to you that my grandmamma, and aunt, and Lucy are of your opinion? They all three wish—but who can deny the dear innocent the grant of a request on which she has so long set her heart? And would it not be pity, methinks I hear the world say, some time hence, especially if any misfortune (God forbid it!) should befall her, that Sir Charles

Grandison, the most honourable of men, should so marry as that a young lady of innocence and merit, and mistress of a fortune which, it might be foreseen, would encourage the attempts of designing men, could not have lived with his wife? Poor child! Then would the world have shaken its wise head (allow the expression), and well for me if it had judged so mildly of me.

Our dear Mr. Deane, though reluctantly, has consented that we shall leave him on Monday next. We shall set out directly for Selby House, where we propose to be the same night. My aunt and I have been urgent with him to go back with us, but he is cross and will be excused.

Just now Lucy tells me that Mr. Deane declared to my uncle, aunt, and her that he will not visit us at Selby House till we send for him and the settlements together, which he will have ready in a week. Strange expedition! Sure they are afraid your brother will change his mind, and are willing to put it out of his power to recede. Lucy smiles at me, and is sure, she says, that she may in confidence reveal all these matters to me, without endangering my life. My next letter will be from Selby House.

While that life continues, my dear ladies, look upon me assuredly yours,

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXVII [vi]

LADY G. TO MISS BYRON

Monday, October 23.

Go on, go on with your narratives, my dear. Hitherto Caroline and I know not how either much to blame you or totally to acquit you of parade, the man and his situation considered, and the state of your heart for so many months

past, every one of your friends—consenting, shall I say?—more than consenting—ardent, to be related to him. Hark ye, Harriet; let me whisper you. My brother, whether he come honestly or not by his knowledge, I dare say, thinks not so highly of the freemasonry part of marriage as you do. You start. "Oh! Charlotte," you cry; and, oh! Harriet, too. But, my dear girl, let my brother see that you think (and no woman in the world does if you don't) that the true modesty, after hearts are engaged, is to think little of parade, and much of the social happiness that awaits two worthy minds united by love and conformity of sentiment. After all, we are silly creatures, Harriet; we are afraid of wise men. No wonder that we seldom choose them when a fool offers. I wish I knew the man, however, who dared to say this in my hearing.

Your grandmother Shirley is more than woman. My brother prodigiously admires her. I think you may trust to her judgment if you suppose him too precipitating. Your aunt is an excellent woman; but I never knew a woman or man who valued themselves on delicacy, and found themselves consulted upon it, but was apt to overdo the matter. Is not this a little, a very little, Mrs. Selby's case? Let her know that I bid you ask this question of herself; she must be assured that I equally love and honour her, so won't be angry.

Your uncle is an odd but a very honest Dunstable soul. Tell him I say so, but withal that he should leave women to act as women in these matters. What a duce, what a pize, would he expect perfection from them?—he, whose arguments always run in the depreciating strain? If he would, ask him, Where should they have it, conversing, as they are obliged to do, with men? Men for their fathers, for their brothers, for their uncles. They must be a little silly, had they not a fund of silliness in themselves. But I would not have them be most out in matters where they should be most in.

I think, however—so does Lady L.—that, so far as you have proceeded, you are tolerable, though not half so clever as he, considering situations. Upon my word, Harriet, allowing for everything, neither of Sir Charles Grandison's sisters expected that their brother would have made so ardent, so polite a lover. He is so prudent a man, and that once had like to have been one of your—even your!—objections—yet so nobly sincere, so manly. Oh that my ape—but come, Harriet, as men go in this age of monkeys and Sir Foplings, Lord G. (for all you) is not to be despised. I, as a good wife ought, will take his part, whoever runs him down. Where much is not given, much—and so forth.

I have told Emily the good news; I could not help it, though you promise to write to her.

Poor thing! she is all ecstasy. She is not the only one who seeks, as her greatest good, what may possibly prove her greatest misfortune. But for her sake, for your sake and my brother's, I hope, under your directing eye and by prudent management (the flame so young), a little cold water will do, and that if it will blaze it may be directed towards Beauchamp's house.

Let me whisper you again, Harriet. Young girls, finding themselves vested with new powers and a set of new inclinations, turn their staring eyes out of themselves; and the first man they see they imagine, if he be a single man and but simpers at them, they must receive him as a lover; then they return downcast for ogle, that he may ogle on without interruption. They are soon brought to write answers to letters which confess flames the writer's heart never felt. The girl doubts not her own gifts, her own consequence; she wonders that her father, mother, and other friends never told her of these new-found excellences; she is more and more beautiful in her own eyes, as he more and more flatters her. If her parents are averse, the girl is perverse, and the more the less discretion there is in her passion. She adopts

the word constancy; she declaims against persecution; she calls her idle flame "love," a cupidity which only was a something she knew not what to make of; and, like a wandering bee, had it not settled on this flower, would on the next, were it either bitter or sweet.

And this generally, with the thoughtless, is the beginning and progress of that formidable invader miscalled love, a word very happily at hand to help giddy creatures to talk with and look without confusion of face on a man telling them a thousand lies; and hoping, perhaps by illaudable means, to attain an end not in itself illaudable, when duty and discretion are—the one the guide, the other the gentle restraint.

But as to Emily. I depend on her principles as well as on your affectionate discretion (when you will be pleased, among ye, to permit my brother to be actually yours), for restraining her imagination. There never beat in female bosom an honester heart. Poor thing! she is but a girl. And who is the woman or child that looks on my brother without love and reverence?

For Emily's sake, you see, you must not have too many of your honest uncle's circumroundabouts. He makes us laugh. I love to have him angry with his dame Selby. Dear Harriet, when your heart's quite at ease, give us the courtship of the odd soul to the light of his eyes, his oddness, and her delicacy. A charming contrast! You did help us to a little of it once, you know. Theirs, on the woman's side, could not be a match of love at first; but who so happy as they? I am convinced, Harriet, that love on one side and discretion on the other is enough in conscience, and in short much better than love on both,—for what room can there be for discretion in the latter case? The man is guilty of a heterodoxy in love, you know, who is prudent, or but suspected of being so. Ah! Harriet, Harriet, once more I say we women are foolish creatures in our love affairs, and

know not what's best for ourselves. In your style, "Don't you think so, Lucy?" Yet I admire Lucy. She got over an improperly placed love; and now, her mad fit over (we have all little or much of it, begun as I told you how), she is so cool, so quiet, so sedate: yet once, I make no doubt, looking forward to her present happy quiescence, would have thought it a state of insipidity. Dearly do we love racketing, and—another whisper—some of us to be racketed. But not you—you are an exception. Yes, to be sure. But I believe you'll think me mad.

We like my brother's little trick upon you in the billet he wrote, and which you signed, as if to Emily. You see how earnest he is, my dear. I long for his next letters from Italy. I think that is a lucky plea enough for you, if you suppose parade necessary.

We have got Everard among us again. The sorry fellow! Oh, Harriet, had you seen him with his hat upon his two thumbs, bowing, cringing, blushing, confounded, when first he came into my royal presence. But I, from my throne, extended the golden sceptre to him, as I knew I should please my brother by it. He sat down when I bid him, twisted his lips, curdled his chin, hemmed, stole a look of reverence at me, looked down when his eyes met mine—mine bold as innocence, his conscious as guilt; hemmed again, turned his hat about; then, with one of his not quite forgotten airs of pertness, putting it under his arm, shook his ears, tried to look up; then his eye sunk again under my broader eye. Oh, my dear, what a paltry creature is a man vice-bitten, and sensible of detected folly and obligation.

Sir Charles has made a man of him once more. His dress is as gay as ever, and, I dare say, he struts as much in it as ever, in company that knows not how he came by it. He reformed! Bad habits are of the Jerusalem-artichoke kind: once planted, there is no getting them out of the ground.

Our good Dr. Bartlett is also with us at present; he is in hopes of seeing my brother in town. "In town," Harriet—and the great affair unsolemnised! Woe be to you if—but let's see how you act when left to yourself. Prudent people in others' matters are not always prudent in their own, especially in their love affairs. A little over-nicety at setting out will carry them into a road they never intended to amble in, and then they are sometimes obliged to the less prudent to put them in the path they set out from. Remember, my dear, I am at hand if you bewilder yourself.

Dr. Bartlett tells us that my brother has extricated this poor creature from his entanglements with his woman by his interposition only by letter: some money, I suppose. The doctor desires to be silent on the means, but hints, however, that Everard will soon be in circumstances not unhappy.

. . . . . .

I have got the doctor to explain himself. Every day produces some new instances of women's follies. What would poor battered rakes and younger brothers do, when on their last legs, were it not for good-natured widows—ay, and sometimes for forward maids? This wretch, it seems, has acquitted himself so handsomely in the discharge of the £100 which he owed to his wine-merchant's relict, and the lady was so full of acknowledgments, and obligations, and all that, for being paid but her due, that he has ventured to make love to her, as it is called, and is well received. He behaves with more spirit before her, I suppose, than he does before me.

The widow had a plain, diligent, honest man before. She has what is called taste, forsooth, or believes she has. She thinks Mr. Grandison a finer gentleman than him who left her in a condition to be thought worthy the address of a gayer man. She prides herself, it seems, in the relation that her marriage will give her to a man of Sir Charles Grandison's character. Much worse reasons will have weight when a woman finds herself inclined to change her condition.

But Everard is very earnest that my brother should know nothing of the matter till all is over; so you (as I) have this piece of news in confidence. Lady L. has not been told it. His cousin, he says, who refused him his interest with Miss Mansfield, Lady W.'s sister, because he thought a further time of probation with regard to his avowed good resolutions necessary, would perhaps, for the widow's sake, if applied to, put a spoke in his wheel.

Everard (I can hardly allow myself to call him Grandison) avows a vehement passion for the widow. She is rich. When they are set out together in taste, as she calls it, trade or business, her first rise, quite forgot, what a gay, what a frolic dance will she and her new husband in a little while lead up on the grave of her poor, plain, despised one!

'Tis well, 'tis well, my dear Harriet, that I have a multitude of faults myself (witness, to go no further back, this letter), or I should despise nine parts of the world out of ten.

I find that Sir Charles and Beauchamp and Dr. Bartlett correspond. Light is hardly more active than my brother, nor lightning more quick, when he has anything to execute that must or ought to be done. I believe I told you early that was a part of his character. You must not then wonder or be offended (shall I use the word offended, my dear?) that you in your turn, now he has found himself at liberty to address you, should be affected by his adroitness and vivacity in your femalities, as uncle Selby calls them; aptly enough, I think, though I do not love that men should be so impudent as either to abuse us or even to find us out. You cannot always, were you to think him too precipitating, separate disagreeable qualities from good in the same person, since perhaps the one is the constitutional occasion of the other. Could he, for example, be half so useful a friend as he is, if he were to dream over a love affair, as you would seem to have him—in other words, gape over his ripened fruit till it dropped into his yaw-yaw-yawning mouth? He'll certainly

get you, Harriet, within or near his proposed time. Look about you. He'll have you before you know where you are. By hook, as the saying is, will he pull you to him, struggle as you will (he has already got hold of you), or by crook—inviting, nay, compelling you by his generosity, gentle, shepherd-like, to nymph as gentle. What you do, therefore, do with such a grace as may preserve to you the appearance of having it in your power to lay an obligation upon him. It is the opinion of both his sisters that he values you more for your noble expansion of heart, and not ignorant but generous frankness of manners, yet mingled with dignity, than for—even—your beauty, Harriet, whether you, who are in such full possession of every grace of person, care, as a woman, to hear of that or not. His gay parterre similitude you remember, my dear. It is my firm belief that those are the greatest admirers of fine flowers who love to see them in their borders, and seldomest pluck the fading fragrance. The other wretches crop, put them in their bosoms, and in an hour or two—rose, carnation, or whatever they be—after one parting smell, throw them away.

He is very busy wherever he is. At his inn, I suppose, most. But he boasts not to you or anybody of what he does.

He writes now and then a letter to aunt Nell, and she is so proud of the favour. "Look you here, niece; look you here! But I shan't show you all he writes." On go the spectacles, for she will not for the world part with the letter out of her hands. She reads one paragraph, one sentence, then another. On and off go the spectacles, while she conjectures, explains, animadverts, applauds, and so goes on till she leaves not a line unread; then folding it up carefully in its cover, puts it in her letter or riband case—which shall I call it? For having but few letters to put in it, the case is filled with bits and ends of ribands, patterns, and so forth, of all manner of colours, faded and fresh, with interminglédoms

of gold-beaters' skin, plaisters for a cut finger, for a chapped lip, a kibe, perhaps for corns, which she dispenses

"Look you here, niece; look you here!"

occasionally very bountifully, and values herself (as we see at such times by a double chin made triple) for being not

unuseful in her generation. Chide me if you will, the humour's upon me; hang me if I care: you are only Harriet Byron as yet. Change your name and increase your consequence.

I have written a long letter already, and to what end? Only to expose myself, say you? True enough. But now, Harriet, to bribe you into passing a milder censure, let me tell you all I can pick up from the doctor relating to my brother's matters. Bribe shall I call this, or gratitude, for your free communications?

Matters between the Mansfields and the Keelings are brought very forward. Hang particulars: nobody's affairs lie near my heart but yours. The two families have already begun to visit. When my brother returns, all the gentry in the neighbourhood are to be invited to rejoice with the parties on the occasion.

Be so kind, my dear, as to dismiss the good man as soon as your punctilio will admit. We are contented that, while he lays himself out so much in the service of others, he should do something for himself. You, my dear, we look upon as a high reward for his many great and good actions. But, as he is a man who has a deep sense of favours granted, and values not the blessing the more (when it ought to be within his reach) because it is dear, as is the case of the sorry fellows in general, I would have you consider of it—that's all.

The doctor tells me, also, that the wicked Bolton's ward is dead, and that everything is concluded, to Sir Charles's satisfaction, with him, and the Mansfields (reinstated in all their rights) are once more a happy family.

Sir Hargrave is in a lamentable way. Dr. Bartlett has great compassion for him. Would you have me pity him, Harriet? You would, you say. Well then, I'll try for it. As it was by his means you and we, and my brother, came acquainted, I think I may. He is to be brought to town.

Poor Sir Harry Beauchamp! He is past recovery. Had

the physicians given him over when they first undertook him, he might, they say, have had a chance for it.

I told you that Emily's mother was turned Methodist. She has converted her husband. A strange alteration! But it is natural for such sort of people to pass from one extreme to another. Emily every now and then visits them. They are ready to worship her for her duty and goodness. She is a lovely girl; she every day improves in her person as well as in her mind. She is sometimes with me, sometimes with Lady L., sometimes with aunt Eleanor, sometimes with your Mrs. Reeves. We are ready to fight for her; but you will soon rob all of us. She is preparing for her journey to you. Poor girl! I pity her. Such a conflict in her mind, between her love of you and tenderness for her guardian. Her Anne has confessed to me that she weeps one-half of the night, yet forces herself to be lively in company. After the example of Miss Byron, she says, when she visited you at Selby House. I hope, my dear, all will be right. But to go to live with a beloved object—I don't understand it. You, Harriet, may. I never was in love, God help me!

I am afraid the dear girl does too much for her mother. As they have so handsome an annuity, £400 a year, so much beyond their expectation, I think she should not give, nor should they receive anything considerable of her without her guardian's knowledge. She is laying out a great deal of money in new clothes, to do you and her guardian credit—on your nuptials, poor thing! she says, with tears in her eyes—but whether of joy or sensibility it is hard to decide, but I believe of both.

What makes me imagine she does more than she should is that a week ago she borrowed fifty guineas of me, and but yesterday came to me.—"I should do a very wrong thing," said she, blushing up to the ears, "should I ask Lady L. to lend me a sum of money till my next quarter comes due, after I made myself your debtor so lately; but if you could lend

me thirty or forty guineas more, you would do me a great favour."

"My dear!" said I, and stared at her.

"Don't question, don't chide me this one time. I never will run in debt again: I hate to be in debt. But you have bid me tell you all my wants."

"I will not, my love, say another word. I will fetch you fifty guineas more."

"More, my dear Lady G.; that is a pretty rub—but I will always for the future be within bounds, and don't let my guardian know it. He will kill me by his generosity, yet perhaps in his own heart wonder what I did with my money. If he thought ill of me, or that I was extravagant, it would break my heart."

"Only, my dear," said I, "remember that £400 a year. Mrs. O'Hara cannot want anything to be done for her now."

"Don't call her Mrs. O'Hara. She is very good: call her my mother."

I kissed the sweet girl, and fetched her the other fifty guineas.

I thought it not amiss to give you this hint, my dear, against she goes down to you. But do you think it right after all to have her with my brother and you?

Lady L. keeps close. She fasts, cries, prays, is vastly apprehensive; she makes me uneasy for her and myself. These vile men! I believe I shall hate them all. Did they partake— But not half so grateful as the blackbirds; they rather look big with insolence than perch near, and sing a song to comfort the poor souls they have so grievously mortified. Other birds, as I have observed (sparrows, in particular) sit hour and hour, he's and she's in turn; and I have seen the hen, when her rogue had stayed too long, rattle at him, while he circles about her with sweeping wings and displayed plumage, his head and breast of various dyes, ardently shining, "Peep, peep, peep," as much as to say, "I beg your pardon, love: I was forced to go a

great way off for my dinner." "Sirrr-rah!" I have thought she has said, in an unforgiving accent. "Do your duty now. Sit close. Peep, peep, peep—I will, I will, I will." Away she has skimmed and returned to relieve him—when she thought fit.

Don't laugh at us, Harriet, in our mortified state. ["Begone, wretch." "What have I done, madam?" staring! "What have you done!" My sorry creature came in wheedling, courting, just as I was pitying two meek sisters. Was it not enough to vex one?] Don't laugh at us, I say. If you do, may my brother all in good time avenge us on you, prays, in malice,

CHARLOTTE G.

Harriet somewhat resents Lady G.'s rallying, but persists in being very reluctant to name the day. She is, however, opposed by her relations, who join Sir Charles. He gives her jewels. There is dismal news of the health of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, who has never recovered his rough treatment in France. Apprehensions are entertained of some fresh outbreak on Greville's part. Clementina writes to Miss Byron, congratulating her, and urging her to hasten the event. Hereupon Harriet capitulates, though still with reserves. These things occupy LETTERS XXVIII.–XL.

LETTER XLI [vi]

MISS BYRON TO LADY G.

Monday morning, November 6.

I SEND you, my dearest Lady G., a copy of your brother's letter of Friday last. Lucy has transcribed it for you. Lucy is very obliging. She desires to be allowed to correspond

with you, and makes a merit of these transcriptions for an introduction: that is her view. I give you fair notice of it, that you may either check or encourage her as you think fit.

Have I not cause to think your brother a little out of the way in his resolution of so sudden a return?—this night perhaps or to-morrow morning. I am vexed, my dear, because he is such an anticipator, that he leaves not to me the merit of obliging him beyond his expectation. However, I shall rejoice to see him. The moment he enters the room where I am, he can have no faults.

My aunt, who thinks he is full hasty, is gone to dine with my grandmamma, and intends to settle with that dear parent everything for his reception at Shirley Manor. My uncle, at Mr. Orme's invitation, is gone to dine with that worthy man.

Monday afternoon.

Oh, my dearest Lady G., what shall we do? All quarrels are at an end, all petulance, all folly. I may never, never be his at all. I may, before the expected time of his arrival, be the most miserable of women. Your brother, best of men! may be—ah! my Charl——

. . . . . .

Terrified to death, my pen fell from my fingers. I fainted away. Nobody came near me. I know I was not long insensible: my terrors broke through even the fit I fell into. Nothing but death itself could make me long insensible on such an occasion. Oh, how I shall terrify you! Dearest Lady G.! But here, here comes my Lucy. Let her give the occasion of my anguish.

The Following written by Miss Lucy Selby.

At my cousin's request, while she is laid down, I proceed, my good Lady G., to account to you for her terrors and for mine also. Dear creature! But don't be too much terrified;

At my cousin's request, while she is laid down, I proceed.

God, we hope—God, we pray, will protect your brother! Mr. Greville cannot be capable of the shocking mischief, barbarity, villainy, which it is apprehended he has in view. God will protect your brother.

Here a note was brought from an anonymous hand—I don't know what I write—from an unknown hand, signifying that Mr. Greville was heard to threaten the life of your brother, and we are told by more than one that he is moody, and in a bad way as to his mind. And he left his house this morning, so the note says (and that he certainly did), and was seen to take the London road, with several servants and others; and the dear Harriet has distracted herself and me with her apprehensions. My aunt out, my uncle out, none but maid-servants at home; we, before she came up to her closet, ran up and down, directing and undirecting; and she promised to go up and try to compose herself till my uncle came from the Park, where he is to dine with Mr. Orme. He is sent for. Thank God, my uncle is come!

By Miss Byron.

And what, my dear Lady G., can his coming signify? Lucy is gone down to show him the anonymous writer's note. Dear, dear sir, lord of my wishes, forgive me all my petulance. Come safe—God grant it! Come safe; and hand and heart I will be yours, if you require it, to-morrow morning.

. . . . . .

Here, Lady G., follows the copy of the alarming note. I broke the seal. It was thus directed:—

"TO GEORGE SELBY, ESQ., WITH SPEED, SPEED, SPEED.

"HONOURED SIR,—A very great respecter of one of the most generous and noblest of men (Sir Charles Grandison, I mean) informs you that his life is in great danger. He

overheard Mr. Greville say, in a rageful manner, as by his voice, 'I never will allow such a prize to be carried from me: he shall die the death;' and swore to it. He was a little in wine, it is true; and I should have disregarded it for that reason, had I not informed myself that he is set out with armed men this morning. Make what use you please of this, you never will know the writer; but love and reverence to the young baronet is all my motive. So help me, God!"

Two of my uncle's tenants severally saw the shocking creature on the London road with servants. What will become of me before morning if he arrive not this night in safety!

Monday night, eleven.

My uncle despatched two servants to proceed on the London road as far as they could go for daylight. He himself rode to Mr. Greville's. Mr. Greville had been out all day and well attended—expected, however, to return at night—to prepare for his escape (who knows?) after the blackest of villainies. My aunt is in tears; my uncle recollects aggravating circumstances. Our preparations, your brother's preparations, Mr. Deane's expected arrival of to-morrow—Lucy weeps. Nancy wrings her hands; your Harriet is in silent anguish—she can weep no more; she can write no more.

Tuesday morning, eight o'clock, November 7.

What a dreadful night have I had! Not a wink of sleep.

And nobody stirring: afraid to come down, I suppose, for fear of seeing each other. My eyes are swelled out of my head. I wonder my uncle is not down. He might give orders about something—I know not what. What dreadful visions had I ready, as it seemed, to continue my disturbance,

could I have closed my eyes to give seeming form to the flying shadows. Waking dreams: for I was broad awake. Sally sat up with me. Such startings, such absences! I never was so before. Such another night would I not have for the world. I can only write. Yet what do I write? To what purpose? You must not see what I have written. Now on my knees, praying, vowing: now—oh! my Lucy.

. . . . . .

Lucy entered just here. Nancy followed her. Nancy tormented me with her reveries of the past night. My aunt is not well; she has not slept. My uncle fell into a doze about his usual rising-time; he has had no rest. My grandmamma must not know the occasion of our grief till it cannot be kept from her—if— But no more. Dreadful "if."

LETTER XLII [vi]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Tuesday, twelve o'clock, November 7.

(*In a small hand, under the superscription of the inner cover.*)

My dearest Lady G., pray read the first page of this letter before you open the other dreadful one (sealed with five seals and stitched to the cover that it may not slide officiously into your hands). Lucy will have me send the whole of that shocking letter. Against my judgment I comply.

We met this morning, soulless and forlorn, all equally unable either to give or receive consolation. The officious note was taken up, laid down, taken up again; the hand endeavoured to be guessed at, and at last it was concluded to despatch a servant to Mr. Greville's to learn news of the supposed traitor.

But, behold, before the servant could return, in a riding-dress, having alighted at the outward gate, entered the hall

your noble brother. I was the first whom he saw, the first who saw him. I was just going out, intending (yet hardly knowing my intention) to walk in the elm-row fronting the house, in order to shorten the way of the returning servant with news.

He approached me with tender respect, something he said, and more he intended to say, excusing his early return, and thanking me for my favour of the Wednesday before, when my joyful surprise overpowered both my speech and senses. And what will you say to me when I tell you that, on my recovery, I found myself in his arms, mine clasped about his neck?

He was surprised at my emotion. Well he might! Every one in a moment crowded about him. My aunt also folded her arms around him. "Welcome, welcome, welcome," was all she could at the instant say.

I, utterly abashed, trembling, and doubting my feet, motioned to quit the hall for the parlour, but nobody minded me; all were busied in congratulating the joy of every heart, till Sally presenting herself, I leaned upon her, and staggering to the parlour, threw myself into an elbow-chair.

Your brother, attended by all my friends, followed me in. My heart again bid him welcome, though my eye could not at that instant bear his. He took my hand, as I sat, between both his, and in the most respectful manner, pressing it with his lips, besought me to compose myself.

They had hinted to him in the hall the cause of all our emotions. They had as much reason to blush as I had. Nancy, it seems, even Nancy, snatched his hand, and kissed it in raptures. How dear is he to us all. He sees it now; there can be no reserves to him after this. Punctilio, family punctilio, mentioned he in his letter! We have now no pretensions to it.

His eyes shone with grateful sensibility. "Look upon

me, loveliest of women," said he, "and tell me you forgive me for my early return; but, though returned, I am entirely at your devotion."

Lucy says she never saw me more to my advantage. I looked upon him, as he bid me, smiling through my tears. He stole gently my handkerchief from my half-hid face; with it he dried my unaverted cheek, and put it, she says, in his bosom. I have lost it.

My uncle and aunt withdrew with him and acquainted him with all particulars. To them he acknowledged, in words of eloquent love, my uncle said, the honour done him by me and by us all, in the demonstrations we had given of our tender regard for him.

I was, by the time of their return to us, pretty well recovered. Sir Charles approached me without taking notice of the emotion I had been in. "Mr. and Mrs. Selby tell me," said he to me, "that I am to be favoured with a residence at our venerable Mrs. Shirley's. This, though a high honour, looks a little distant—so would the next door, if it were not under the same roof with my Miss Byron; but," smiling tenderly upon me, "I shall presume to hope that this very distance will turn to my account. Mrs. Shirley's Harriet cannot decline paying her accustomed duty to the best of grandmothers."

Bowing, "I shall not, sir," said I, "be the more backward to pay my duty to my grandmamma for your obliging her with your company."

"Thus," resumed he, ardently kissing my hand, "do I honour to myself for the honour done me. How poor is man that he cannot express his gratitude to the object of his vows, for obligations conferred, but by owing to her new obligation!"

Then turning to my aunt, "It is incumbent upon me, madam," said he, "to pay my early devoirs to Mrs. Shirley—the hospitable Mrs. Shirley," repeated he, smiling; which

And put it, she says, in his bosom. I have lost it.

looked as if he expected to be here. "There, besides" (looking pleasantly upon my aunt), "I may be asked—here I am not—to break my fast."

This set us all into motion. My uncle ran out to look after Sir Charles's servants, who, it seems, in our hurry, were disregarded—their horses in the court-yard, three of them walking about, waiting their master's orders. My uncle was ready, in the true taste of old English hospitality, to pull them in.

Chocolate was instantly brought for their master, and a dish for each of us. We had made but a poor breakfast any of us. I could get nothing down before my aunt put a second dish into my hand. I took her kind meaning, and presented it to Sir Charles. How gratefully did he receive it! Will it always be so, Lady G.? My love, heightened by my duty, shall not, when the obligation is doubled, make me less deserving of his politeness, if I can help it.

But still this dreadful note, and Greville's reported moodiness, made us uneasy. The servant we sent returned with information that Mr. Greville came home late last night. He was not stirring, it seems, though eleven o'clock, when the servant reached his house. He is said to be not well, and, as one servant of his told ours, so very fretful and ill-tempered that they none of them know how to speak to him. God grant—but let me keep to myself such of my apprehensions as are founded on conjecture—why should I not hope the best? Is not your beloved brother at present safe?—and is he not the care of Providence? I humbly trust he is.

Sir Charles took the note. "I think I have seen the hand," said he; "if I have, I shall find out the writer. I dare say it is written with a good intention."

My uncle and we all expressed—some in words, some by looks—our apprehensions.

"There cannot possibly be room for any," said Sir Charles, always present to himself. "Mr. Greville loves Miss Byron.

It is no wonder, as his apprehensions of losing all hopes of her for ever grow stronger, that he should be uneasy. He would make but an ill compliment to her merit and his own sincerity if he were not. But such a stake as he has in his country—he cannot have desperate intentions. I remember to his advantage his last behaviour here. I will make him a visit. I must engage Mr. Greville to rank me in the number of his friends."

What he said gave us comfort. No wonder if we women love courage in a man: we ought, if it be true courage, like that of your excellent brother. After all, my dear, I think we must allow a natural superiority in the minds of men over women. Do we not want protection, and does not that want imply inferiority? Yet if there be two sorts of courage, an acquired and a natural, why may not the former be obtained by women as well as by men, were they to have the same education? Natural courage may belong to either. Had Miss Barnevelt, for example, had a boy's education, she would have probably challenged her man on provocation given, and he might have come off but poorly.

But we have more silly antipathies than men, which help to keep us down; whether those may not sometimes be owing to affectation do you, Lady G.—who, however, have as little affectation as ever woman had—determine. A frog, a toad, a spider, a beetle, an earwig will give us mighty pretty tender terror; while the heroic men will trample the insect under foot, and look the more brave for their barbarity, and for our delicate screaming. But for an adventure, if a lover get us into one, we frequently leave him a great way behind us. Don't you think so, Lady G.? Were not this Greville still in my head, methinks I could be as pert as ever.

Sir Charles told us that he should have been with us last night, but for a visit he was obliged to pay to Sir Harry Beauchamp, to make up for which hindrance he took horse, and ordered his equipage to follow him.

He is gone to pay his duty, as he is pleased to call it, to my grandmamma, in my uncle's coach, my uncle with him. If they cannot prevail on my grandmamma to come hither to dinner, and if she is desirous Sir Charles should dine with her, he will oblige her—by my aunt's leave, was his address to her. But perhaps she will have the goodness to add her company to his, as she knows that will give us all double pleasure: she loves to give pleasure. Often does the dear lady say, "How can palsied age, which is but a terrifying object to youth, expect the indulgence, the love of the young and gay, if it does not study to promote those pleasures which itself was fond of in youth? Enjoy innocently your season, girls," once said she, setting half-a-score of us into country dances. "I watch for the failure of my memory, and shall never give it over for quite lost till I forget what were my own innocent wishes and delights in the days of my youth."

Tuesday, five o'clock.

My uncle and Sir Charles came back to dinner, my grandmamma with them. She was so good as to give them her company at the first word. Sir Charles, as we sat at dinner, and afterwards, saw me weak in mind, bashful, and not quite recovered; and he seemed to watch my uncle's eyes, and so much diverted him and all of us, that my uncle had not opportunity to put forth as usual. How did this kind protection assure me! I thought myself quite well, and was so cheerfully silent when Sir Charles talked that my grandmamma and aunt, who had placed me between them, whispered me severally—"You look charmingly easy, love: you look like yourself, my dear." Yet still this mischievous Greville ran in my head.

My uncle took notice that Sir Charles had said he guessed at the writer of the note. He wished he would give him an item, as he called it, whom he thought of.

"You observe, sir," answered Sir Charles, "that the writer says Mr. Greville was in wine. He professes to be an encourager of the people of the 'George' in Northampton. He often appoints company to meet him there. I imagine the writer to be the head-waiter of the house; the bills delivered me in it seem to have been written in such a hand as the note, as far as I can carry the handwriting in my eye."

"Ads-heart," said my uncle, "that's undoubtedly right: your name's up, sir, I can tell you, among men, women, and children. This man, in his note, calls you (look, else!) the most generous and noble of men. He says we shall never know the writer. Ads-dines! the man must deal in art magic that conceals himself from you, if you have a mind to find him out."

"Well, but," said Lucy, "if this be so, I am concerned at the reality of the information. Such threatenings as Mr. Greville throws out are not to be slighted."

"Very true," said my uncle. "Mr. Deane and I (Mr. Deane will certainly be here by-and-by) will go and discourse with Greville himself to-morrow, please the Lord."

Sir Charles begged that this matter might be left to his management. "Mr. Greville and I," said he, "are upon such a foot as, whether he be so sincerely my friend as I am his or not, will warrant a visit to him; and he cannot but take it as a civility on my return into these parts."

"Should he be affronting, Sir Charles?" said my uncle.

"I can have patience if he should. He cannot be grossly so."

"I know not that," replied my uncle; "Mr. Greville is a roister."

"Well, dear Mr. Selby, leave this matter to me. Were there to be danger, the way to avoid it is not to appear to be afraid of it. One man's fear gives another courage. I have no manner of doubt of being able to bring Mr.

Greville with me to an amicable dish of tea or to dinner, which you please, to-morrow."

"Ads-heart, sir, I wish not to see at either the wretch who could threaten the life of a man so dear to us all."

Sir Charles bowed to my uncle for his sincere compliment. "I have nothing to do," said he, "but to invite myself either to breakfast or dine with him. His former scheme of appearing to the world well with me, in order to save his spirit, will be resumed, and all will be right."

My aunt expressed her fears, however, and looked at me, as I did at her, with a countenance, I suppose, far from being unapprehensive; but Sir Charles said, "You must leave me, my dear friends, to my own methods, nor be anxious for my safety. I am not a rash man. I can pity Mr. Greville, and the man I pity cannot easily provoke me."

We were all the easier for what the charmingly cool, because truly brave man said on a subject which has given us all so much terror.

But was he not very good, my dear, not to say one word all this day of the important errand on which he came down, and to lead the subjects of conversation with design, as my aunt and grandmamma both thought, as well as I, that my uncle should not, and to give me time to recover my spirits? Yet when he did address himself to me, never were tenderness and respect so engagingly mingled. This my uncle observed, as well as my aunt and Lucy. "How the duce," said he, "does this Sir Charles manage it? He has a way no man but him ever found out. He can court without speech; he can take one's heart and say never a word. Hay, Harriet?" looking archly.

. . . . . .

Mr. Deane is come—in charming health and spirits, thank God. With what cordiality did Sir Charles and he embrace each other!

Sir Charles attended my grandmamma home, so we had

not his company at supper: no convenience without its contrary. He is her own son; she is his own parent. Such an unaffected love on both sides! Such a sweetly easy yet respectful familiarity between them! What additional pleasures must a young woman in my situation have, when she can consider herself as the bond of union between the family she is of and that she is entering into! How dreadful, on the contrary, must be her case who is the occasion of propagating dissension, irreconcilable hatred, and abhorrence between her own relations and those of the man to whom she for life engages herself!

My grandmother and Sir Charles were no sooner gone than my uncle began to talk with Mr. Deane on the subject that is nearest all our hearts. I was afraid the conversation would not be managed to my liking; and having too just an excuse to ask leave to withdraw, from bad, or rather no rest, last night, I made use of it, and here in my closet (preparing now, however, for it) am I,

Your ever affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XLIII [vi]

MISS BYRON. IN CONTINUATION

Wednesday morning, November 8.

SIR CHARLES let my grandmother come hither by herself. He is gone to visit that Greville. We are all in pain for him, but Mr. Deane comforts us.

After breakfast, thus began my uncle upon me.

"Here, Dame Selby, are we still at a fault? Harriet knows not what she would be at, and you uphold her in her nonsenses. Delicacy! Delicacy! The duce take me, if I have any notion of it! What a pize are you about?"

"Dear sir, why am I blamed?" said I. "What would you have me do that I have not done?"

"Do! why, I would have you give him his day and keep to it; that I would have you do, and not shilly-shally for ever —and subject the best of men to insults. All your men will be easy and quiet when the ceremony is over, and they know there is no remedy."

"My good Mr. Selby," said my grandmamma, "you now blame without reason. Sir Charles was full hasty. Harriet was a little more nice perhaps, her lover considered, than she needed to be. Yet I don't know but I, in her case, should have done as she did, and expected as much time as she was willing to take. It was not a very long one, Mr. Selby, from the declaration he made, and he is a man himself of great delicacy. Harriet very readily acknowledged to him the preference she gave him to all men; and when she found him very earnest for a short day, she, by her last letter, threw herself generously into his power. He is full of acknowledgments upon it, and so he ought to be. To me he has said all that a man should say of his gratitude upon the occasion; and he declared to me last night that it was with difficulty he forbore taking advantage of her goodness to him, but that he checked himself and led to other subjects, seeing how much the dear creature was disordered, and being apprehensive that, if he had begun upon one so interesting, or even wished to talk with her alone, he should have increased her disorder."

"Oy, oy! Sir Charles is considerate, and Harriet should be grateful; but, indeed, my Dame Selby is as silly to the full as Harriet. She is for having Harriet keep her in countenance in the dance she led me so many years ago. Lady G., for my money. She finds you all out in your masonry."

"Mr. Selby," said my aunt, "I only refer myself to what Mrs. Shirley just now said."

"And so don't think it worth while to hold an argument with me, I suppose?"

"I did not know, my dear, that you wanted to hold an argument."

"Your servant, madam—with that sly leer. So like Harriet, and Harriet so like you."

"But, Mr. Selby," said my grandmamma, "will you be pleased to tell the dear child, if you think her wrong, what is the next step she should take?"

"Think her wrong! Next step! Why, the next step is, as she has promised to oblige him and to be directed by him, to keep her word and not hum nor haw about the matter."

Mr. Deane, who had been shown and told everything that had passed since we saw him last, said, "You don't know, Mr. Selby, that my daughter Byron will make unnecessary parade. Sir Charles, you find, in tenderness to her, asked no question yesterday, made no claim. She could not begin the subject."

"But," said Lucy, "I cannot but say that my cousin is in some fault."

"Look you there now," said my uncle.

We all stared at Lucy, for she spoke and looked very seriously.

"Might she not have said," proceeded she, "when Sir Charles surprised her at his first arrival (what though her heart was divided between past terror and present joy?), 'Here I am, sir, at your service—are you prepared for to-morrow?' and then made him one of her best courtesies."

"Sauce-box! Well, well, I believe I have been a little hasty in my judgment" (rapping under the table with his knuckles); "but I am so afraid that something will happen between the cup and the lip—here, last night, I dreamt that Lady Clementina and he were going to be married. Give me your hand, my dear Harriet, and don't revoke the kindness in your last letter to him; but whatever be the day he proposes, comply, and you will win my heart for ever."

"As Sir Charles leads, Harriet must follow," resumed my grandmamma. "You men are sad prescribers in these delicate cases, Mr. Selby. You will be put to it, my dear love," taking my hand, "before this day is over, now you seem so purely recovered. Sir Charles Grandison is not a dreaming lover. Prepare your mind, my child: you'll be put to it, I do assure you."

"Why, oy, I can't but say, Sir Charles is a man. Don't you, my lovely love, be too much a woman, too close a copier of your aunt Selby here; and, as I said, you will have my heart for ever. Oy, and Sir Charles's too, for he is not one of your sorry fellows that can't distinguish between a favour and a folly."

My uncle then went out with a flourish, and took Mr. Deane with him.

We had a good deal of talk upon the important subject. The conclusion was that I would refer Sir Charles to my grandmamma, if he were urgent for the day, and she was vested with a discretionary power to determine for her girl.

Such of my clothes, then, as were near finished, were ordered to be produced, with some of the ornaments. They were all to sit in judgment upon them.

Surely, Lady G., these are solemn circumstances, lightly as my uncle thinks of them. Must not every thoughtful young creature on so great a change, and for life, have conflicts in her mind, be her prospects ever so happy, as the day approaches? Of what materials must the hearts of runaways, and of fugitives to men half-strangers to them, be compounded?

My aunt has just left with me the following billet from Sir Charles, directed to my uncle, from Mr. Greville's:—

"Dear Mr. Selby,—I regret every moment that I pass out of Selby House or Shirley Manor; and as I have so few particular friends in these parts out of your family, I think I ought to account to you for the hours I do; nor will I,

now our friendship is so unalterably fixed and acknowledged, apologise for giving myself, by this means, the consequence with your family that every one of yours, for their single sakes, are of to me, superadded to the tenderest attachments to one dear person of it.

"I found the gentleman in a less happy disposition than I expected.

"It is with inexpressible reluctance that he thinks, as my happy day draws near, of giving up all hopes of an object so dear to him. He seemed strangely balancing on this subject when I was introduced to him. He instantly proposed to me, and with some fierceness, that I would suspend all thoughts of marriage for two months to come, or at least for one. I received his request with proper indignation. He pretended to give reasons respecting himself; I allowed not of them.

"After some canvassings, he swore that he would be complied with in something. His alternative was my dining with him, and with some of his chosen friends, whom he had invited.

"I have reason to think these friends are those to whom he expressed himself with violence at the 'George,' as overheard, I suppose, by the waiter there.

"He rode out, he owned, yesterday morning, with intent to meet me; for he boasts that he knows all my motions, and those of a certain beloved young lady. Let him, let everybody who thinks it their concern to watch our steps be made acquainted with them: the honest heart aims not at secrets. I should glory in receiving Miss Byron's hand from yours, sir, before ten thousand witnesses.

"Mr. Greville had rode out the night before—he did not say to meet me, but he knew I was expected at Selby House, either on Monday night or yesterday morning; and on his return, not meeting me, he and his friends passed their night at the 'George,' as mentioned, and rode out together in the

morning—in hopes of meeting me, he said, and to engage me to suspend my happy day. Poor man! Had he been in his right mind he could not have hoped (had he met me on the road) to have been heard on such a subject.

"An act of oblivion and thorough reconciliation, he calls it, is to pass, in presence of his expected friends.

"You will not take notice of what I have hinted at out of the family, whatever was designed.

"In the temper he would have found me in, had he met me, no harm could have happened, for he is really to be pitied.

"We are now perfect friends. He is full of good wishes. He talks of a visit to Lady Frampton of a month. I write thus particularly, that I may not allow such a subject as this to interfere with that delightful one which engrosses my whole attention, and which, I hope, in the evening will be honoured with the attention of the beloved and admired of every heart, as well as that of

"Your ever obliged and affectionate

"CHARLES GRANDISON."

Poor wicked Greville! May he go to Lady Frampton's or wherever else, so it be fifty miles distant from us. I shall be afraid of him till I hear he has quitted for a time his seat in this neighbourhood.

What a glorious quality is courage when it is divested of rashness, when it is founded on integrity of heart and innocence of life and manners! But otherwise founded, is it not rather to be called savageness and brutality?

How much trouble have I given your brother? What dangers have I involved him in? It cannot be possible for me ever to reward him; but the proudest heart may deem it a glory to owe obligation to Sir Charles Grandison.

LETTERS XLIV.–LII.—*Miss Byron announces the fixture of the day to Lady G., and seven letters of congratulation, preparation, invitation, &c., follow.*

LETTER LIII [vi]

LADY G. TO LADY L. IN CONTINUATION

THIS happy event has been so long wished for by us all, we are so much delighted with the bride as well as the bridegroom, so many uncertainties, so many suspenses have fallen in; so little likelihood once that it ever would have been, and you are so miserably tied by the leg, poor Caroline! and so little to divert you, besides the once smiling to the ten times squalling of your little stranger, that compassion, love, both incite me to be minute, that so you may be as much with us in idea as we all wished you could have been in person.

Crowds of people lined the way, in our return from church as well as in our way to it; and blessings were pronounced upon the happy pair, by hundreds, at their alighting at Selby House.

When we were all assembled in the great hall, mutual congratulations flowed from every mouth. Then did every man salute the happy bride; then did the equally happy bridegroom salute every lady. There was among us the height of joy—joy becoming the awful solemnity; and every one was full of the decent behaviour and the delight expressed by the crowds of spectators of all ranks and both sexes—a delight and decency worthy of the characters of the admirable pair; and Miss Nedham declared, and all the young ladies joined with her, that if she could be secure of the like good behaviour

and encouragement, she would never think of a private wedding for herself. Mr. Selby himself was overjoyed too much even to utter a jest. Now, now, he said, he had attained the height of his ambition.

The dear Harriet could look up, she could smile around her. I led her, with Lucy, into the cedar parlour. "Now, my dear love," said I, the moment we entered it, throwing my arms about her, just as her lips were joyfully opening to speak to me, "do I salute my real sister, my sister Grandison, in my dear Lady L.'s name as well as in my own. God Almighty confirm and establish your happiness!"

"My dearest, dearest Lady G., how grateful, how encouraging to my heart is your kind salutation. Your continued love and that of my dear Lady L. will be essential to my happiness."

"May our hearts be ever united," replied I. "But they must; for were not our minds kindred minds before?"

"But you must love my Lucy," said she, presenting her to me. "You must love my grand——"

"Mamma," said I, catching the word from her—"your aunt, your uncle, your cousins, and your cousins' cousins, to the twentieth generation. And so I will—ours, yours—yours, ours. We are all of one family, and will be for ever."

"What a happy creature am I," replied she. "How many people can one good man make so! But where is my Emily, sweet girl? Bring to me, Lucy, bring to me my Emily."

Lucy went out, and led in the dear girl. With hands and eyes uplifted, "My dear Miss Byron that was—now Lady Grandison," said she, "love me; love your Emily. I am now your Emily, your ward; love me as well as you did when Miss Byron."

Harriet threw her arms about her neck. "I do, I will, I must; you shall be my sister, my friend—my Emily now indeed. Love me as I will love you, and you shall find your happiness in mine."

Sir Charles entered, his Beauchamp with him. Taking her hand, he kissed it. "Once more," said he, "do I thank my dearest life for the honour she has done me;" then with his other hand taking his Beauchamp's, he presented each to the other, as brother and sister.

Beauchamp, in a graceful manner, bowed on her hand; she courtesied to him with an air of dignity and esteem.

He then, turning to Emily, "Acknowledge, my dear," said he, "your elder sister: my Harriet will love her Emily. Receive, my dearest life, your ward. Yet" (to Emily) "I acquit not myself of the power, any more than of the will of obliging you at first hand."

"Oh, sir," said the sobbing girl, "you are all goodness! But I will make no request to you but through my dearest Lady Grandison's mediation. If she approve of it first, I shall not doubt of its fitness to be complied with."

Was not that pretty in Emily? Oh, how Beauchamp's eyes loved her!

"But why, ladies," said Sir Charles, "do you sequester yourselves from the company? Are we not all of a family to-day? The four little Floras, with their baskets in their hands, were entering the gate as I came in; receive them, my love, with your usual graciousness. We will join the company, and call them in. My Beauchamp, you are a brideman. Restore my bride to her friends and admirers within."

He took Emily's hand. She looked so proud. Harriet gave hers to Beauchamp. We followed them into the great hall. Mr. Selby had archness in his look, and seemed ready to blame us for withdrawing. Sir Charles was aware of him. "My dear Mr. Selby," said he, "will you not allow us to see the pretty Floras?"

"By all means," said Mr. Selby, and hurried out and introduced them.

Sweet pretty girls! We had more leisure to consider the

elegant rusticity of their dresses and appearance. They had their baskets in their hands, and a courtesy and a blush ready for every one in company. Sir Charles seemed to expect that his bride would take notice of them first; but observing that she wanted presence of mind, he stepped to them, took each by the hand, called them "pretty loves," and put into each basket, wrapped up in paper, five guineas; then presented them, two in each hand, to his bride, who by that time was better prepared to receive them with that sweet ease and familiarity which give grace to all she says and does.

The children afterwards desiring to go to their parents, the polite Beauchamp himself, accompanied by Lucy, led them to them, and returned with a request from all the tenants that they might have the honour, some time in the day, to see the bride and bridegroom among them, were it but for two minutes. "What says my love?" said Sir Charles. "Oh, sir, I cannot, cannot." "Well, then, I will attend them, to make your excuse, as well as I can." She bowed her thanks.

The time before dinner was devoted to conversation. Sir Charles was nobody's—no, not very particularly his bride's; he put every one upon speaking in turn. For about half-an-hour he sat between the joyful Mrs. Shirley and Mrs. Selby, but even then, in talking to them, talked to the whole company, yet in his air and manner to both showed so much respect as needed not the aid of a particular address to them in words.

This was observed to me by good Lord L.; for Harriet (uneasy, every eye continually upon her, thoughtful, bashful) withdrawing a little before dinner, with a cast of her eye to me, I followed her to her dressing-room. There, with so much expressiveness of meaning though not of language, so much tenderness of love, so much pious gratitude, so much true virgin sensibility, did she open her heart to me, that I shall ever revolve what passed in that conversation as the true criterion of virgin delicacy unmingled with affectation.

Nor was I displeased that, in the height of her grateful self-congratulation, she more than once acknowledged a sigh for the admirable Clementina. We just began to express our pleasure and our hopes in the good behaviour of our Emily, when we were called to dinner.

It was a sumptuous one.

Mr. Selby was very orderly upon the whole, but he remembered, he said, that when he was married (and he called upon his dame to confirm it) he was obliged to wait on his bride and the company; and he insisted upon it that Sir Charles should.

No, no, no, every one said; and the bride looked a little serious upon it; but Sir Charles, with an air of gaiety that infinitely became him, took a napkin from the butler, and putting it under his arm—"I have only one request to make you, my dear Mr. Selby. When I am more awkward than I ought to be, do you correct me, and I shall have both pride and pleasure in the task."

"Adad!" said Mr. Selby, looking at him with pleasure. "You may be anything, do anything; you cannot conceal the gentleman. Ads-heart, you must always be the first man in company. Pardon me, my lords."

Sir Charles was the modestest servitor that ever waited at table while his napkin was under his arm, but he laid it down while he addressed himself to the company, finding something to say to each, in his pithy agreeable manner, as he went round the table. He made every one happy. With what delight did the elder ladies look upon him when he addressed himself to each of them! He stopped at the bride's chair and made her a compliment with an air of tenderness. I heard not what it was, sitting at distance; but she looked grateful, pleased, smiled, and blushed. He passed from her to the bride-maids, and again complimented each of them. They also seemed delighted with what he said. Then going to Mr. Selby—"Why don't you bid me resume the napkin,

sir?" "No, no; we see what you can do; your conformity is enough for me. You may now sit down, when you please. You make the waiters look awkward."

He took his seat, thanked Mr. Selby for having reminded him of his duty, as he called it, and was all himself, the most graceful and obliging of men. You know, my dear Lady L., how much I love to praise my brother. My poor lord! I am glad, however, that he has a tolerable good set of teeth. They were always visible. A good honest sort of man though, Lady L., whatever you may think of him.

After dinner, at Mr. Selby's reminding motion, Sir Charles and the men went to the tenants. They all wished him joy; and as they would not sit down while he stood, Sir Charles took a seat among them, and all the rest followed his example.

One of the honest men, it seems, remembered the nuptials of Mr. and Mrs. Byron, and praised them as the best and happiest of the human race; others confirmed his character of both; another knew the late Mr. Shirley, and extolled him as much; another remembered the birth, another the christening of the bride, and others talked of what an excellent creature she was from infancy. "Let me tell you, sir," said one grey-headed man, "you will have much ado to deserve her; and yet you are said to be as good as you are handsome." The women took up the cause. They were sure, by what they had heard, if any man in the world could deserve the bride it was Sir Charles Grandison; and they would swear for him by his looks. One of the honest men said they should all have taken it as a hugeous favour were they allowed to wish the bride joy, though at ever so great a distance.

Sir Charles said "he was sure the women would excuse her this day, and then the men would, in complaisance to them. We will hope," said he, looking round him, "before we leave Northamptonshire, for one happy dinner together."

They all got up to bow and courtesy, and looked upon each other; and the men, who are most of them freeholders,

wished to the Lord for a new election, and that he would come among them. They had no great matter of fault to find, they said, with their present representatives; but anybody who would oppose Sir Charles Grandison would stand no chance. The women joined in the declaration, as if they thought highly, as Sir Charles pleasantly observed, of their own influence over their husbands. They all wondered that he was not in Parliament, till they heard how little a while he had been in England.

He took leave of the good people (who, by their behaviour and appearance, did as much credit to their landlords as to themselves) with his usual affability and politeness, repeating his promise of "a day of Jubilee," as some of them called it.

The ball, at the request of the whole company, was opened by the bride and bridegroom. She was very uneasy at the general call. Sir Charles saw she was, and would have taken out Miss Nedham, but it was not permitted. The dear creature, I believe, did her best at the time; but I have seen her perform better: yet she did exceedingly well. But such a figure herself, and such a partner! How could she do amiss?

Emily was taken out by Beauchamp. He did his best, I am sure, and almost as much excelled his pretty partner as his beloved friend did his.

Emily, sitting down by me, asked if she did not perform very ill. "Not very ill, my dear," said I, "but not so well as I have seen you dance."—"I don't know," said she, "what ails me: my heart is very heavy, madam. What can be the meaning of it? But don't tell Lady Grandison so. Heigh-ho! Lady Grandison! What a sound is that? A charming sound — but how shall I bring my lips to be familiarised to it?"

"You are glad she is married, my love, I dare say?"

"Glad! To be sure I am. It is an event that I have long, long wished for; but new names and new titles one

The ball, at the request of the whole company, was opened by the bride and bridegroom.

knows not how to frame one's mouth to presently. It was some time before I could call you Lady G. But don't you pity poor Lady Clementina a little, madam?"

"A great deal I do. But as she refused my brother——"

"Ah! dear, that's the thing. I wonder she could—when he would have let her have the free exercise of her religion."

"Had you rather your guardian had married Lady Clementina, Emily?"

"Oh no. How can you ask me such a question, madam? Of all the women in the world, I wished him to have Miss Byron. But she is too happy for pity, you know, madam. Bless me! What does she look so thoughtful for? Why does she sigh so? Surely she can't be sorry."

"Sorry? No, my love. But a change of condition for life. New attachments! A new course of life! The property, person, and will of another, excellent as the man is, —obliged to go to a new house—to be engrafted into a new family—to leave her own, who so dearly love her—an irrevocable destiny. Do you think, Emily, new in her present circumstances, every eye upon her, it is not enough to make a considerate mind, as hers is, thoughtful?"

"All these are mighty hardships, madam," putting up her lip. "But, Lady G., can you suppose she thinks them so? If she does—but she is a dear good lady. I shall ever love her. She is an ornament of our sex. See how lovely she looks. Did your ladyship ever see so sweet a creature? I never did."

"Nor for beauty, dignity, ease, figure, modesty, good sense did I ever."

"She is my guardianess, may I say? Is there such a word? I shall be as proud of her as I am of my guardian. Yet there is no cause of sighing, I think. See my guardian, her husband. Unfashionable as the word is, it is a pretty word. The house-band that ties all together—is not that the

meaning? Look round. How does he surpass all men! His ease—talk of ease! His dignity—talk of dignity! As handsome a man as she is a woman! See how every young lady eyes him, every young gentleman endeavours to imitate him. I wish he would take me out: I would do better."

This was the substance of the whispering dialogue that passed between Emily and me. Poor girl!

Mr. Selby danced with Lucy, and got great applause. He was resolved, he said, to have one dance with the bride. She besought him not to think of it. Her grandmamma, her aunt entreated for her. She desired Sir Charles to interpose. "If, my dearest life, you could oblige your uncle"—"I cannot, cannot think of it," said she.

"Lady G." said Sir Charles, "be so good as to challenge Mr. Selby." I stood forth, and offered my hand to him. He could not refuse it. He did not perform so well as he did with Lucy. "Go," said I, when we had done, "sit down by your dame and be quiet: you have lost all your credit. You dance with a bride! Some people know not how to bear applause, nor to leave off when they are well." Lord L. took out Mrs. Selby. She dances very gracefully. Your lord, you know, is above praise. The young Lord Reresby and Miss Nedham distinguished themselves. My odd creature was in his element. He and Miss Barclay, and another time he and Emily, did very handsomely; and the girl got up her reputation. Lord W. did hobble, and not ungracefully, with old Mrs. Selby, who had not danced, she said, for twenty years before, but, on so joyful an occasion, would not refuse Lord W.'s challenge; and both were applauded —the time of life of the lady, the limpingness of my lord considered.

There was a very plentiful sideboard of rich wines, sweetmeats, &c.

We all disclaimed formal supper.

We went afterwards into country dances.

Mrs. Shirley retired about ten. Harriet took the opportunity of attending her. I had an intimation to follow.

I found her just drop on her knees to her grandmamma, who, with her arms about her neck, was folding to her fond heart the darling of it.

I was called upon to give my opinion whether she should return to the company or not. I gave it that she should, and that she should retire for the night about eleven. As to the bride-maids, I said I would manage that they should only attend her to her chamber, and leave her there with her aunt, Lucy, and me. Lord L. had undertaken to make the gentlemen give up form, which, he said, they would the more easily do as they were set into dancing.

After all, Lady L., we women, dressed out in ribands and gaudy trappings, and in virgin-white on our wedding-days, seem but like milk-white heifers led to sacrifice. We ought to be indulged if we are not shameless things, and very wrong indeed in our choice of the man we can love.

When we returned to the company, Mr. Selby broke from his partner, Miss Barclay, to whisk into the figure the bride.

Sir Charles joined the deserted lady, who seemed much better pleased with her new partner than with her old one.

Lord W., who was sitting down, took Mrs. Selby's hand and led her into the dance.

I drew Miss Nedham to the sideboard, and gave her her cue; she gave theirs to the three other bride-maids.

About eleven, Mrs. Selby, unobserved, withdrew with the bride. The bride-maids, one by one, to be the less observed, waited on her to her chamber, saluted her, and returned to company.

The dear creature wanted presence of mind. She fell into my reflection above. "Oh, my dear Lady G.," said she, "was I not right when I declared that I never would marry, were it not to the man I loved above all the men in the world?"

She complimented me twenty times with being very good. She prayed for me; but her prayers were meant for herself.

You remember that she told me, on my apprehensiveness on the like occasion, that fear made me loving to her. On her blessing me, "Ah! Harriet," said I, "you now find that apprehension will make one pious as well as loving."

"My sister, my friend, my own, my Caroline's, my brother's, dear Lady Grandison," said I, when I left her, near undressed, "God bless you! and God be praised that I can call you by these tender names. My brother is the happiest of men, you of women. May we never love each other less than we do now. Look forward to the serene happiness of your future lot. If you are the joy of our brother, you must be our joy and the jewel of our family."

She answered me only by a fervent embrace, her eyes lifted up, surcharged, as I may say, with tears of joy, as in thankfulness.

I then rushed downstairs and into the company.

My brother instantly addressed me. "My Harriet," whispered he with impatience, "returns not this night."

"You will see Mrs. Selby, I presume, by-and-by," returned I.

He took his seat by old Mrs. Selby, and fell into talk with her to avoid joining in the dances. Mrs. Selby at last came in. Her eyes showed the tender leave she had taken of her Harriet.

My brother approached her. She went out; he followed her.

In a quarter of an hour she returned.

We saw my brother no more that night.

We continued our dancings till between three and four.

I have often observed that we women, whether weakly or robust, are hardly ever tired with dancing. It was so with us. The men, poor souls! looked silly and sleepy by two—all but my ape; he has a good many femalities, as uncle Selby calls

them. But he was brought up to be idle and useless, as women generally are.

I must conclude my letters whimsically, my dear; if I did not, you would not know them to be written by your

CHARLOTTE G.

LETTER LIV [vi]

LADY G. IN CONTINUATION

EMILY, Lucy, and I went to pay our morning compliments as soon as we arose, which was not very early, to my brother, being told that he was in the cedar parlour writing. He received us like himself. "I am writing," said he, "a few very short letters. They are to demand the felicitations—one of our beloved Caroline, one of our aunt Grandison, one of the Earl of G., and one of our dear Dr. Bartlett. There is another. You may read it, Charlotte."

That also was a short one, to signify, according to promise, as I found, to Signor Jeronymo della Porretta the actual celebration of his nuptials.

I returned it to him. "Like my brother" was all I said.

It concluded with a caution, given in the most ardent terms, against precipitating the admirable Clementina.

We went up to the bride. She was dressing. Her aunt was with her and her two cousin Holles's, who went not home the preceding night.

The moment we entered, she ran to us and clasped her arms about my neck. "My dearest, dearest Lady G., am I indeed your sister, your sister Grandison?"

"My dearest, lovely sister! My own sister Grandison! My brother's wife! Most sincerely do I repeat, Joy, joy, joy to my Harriet."

"Oh, Lady G., how you raise me! Your goodness is a

seasonable goodness to me. I never, never, but by yours and your sister's example, shall be worthy of your brother."

Then embracing Emily, "My sweet young friend, in my happiness you shall find your own."

Emily wept, and even sobbed. "You must, you must treat me less kindly, madam. I cannot, cannot bear your good —your goodness. On my knees I acknowledge my other guardian. God bless my dear, dear Lady Grandison."

At that moment, as they were folded in each other's arms, entered my brother. He clasped his round his sweet bride. "Pardon this intrusion," said he. "Excellent creature, continue to love my Emily. Continue, my Emily, to deserve the sisterly love of my Harriet."

Then turning to me, saluting me—"My Charlotte loves my Harriet; so does our Caroline. She fondly loves you both. God continue your love to each other! What a sister has yesterday's happy event given to each other—what a wife to me. We will endeavour, my love" (to her), "to deserve our happiness; and, I humbly trust, it will be continued to us."

He saluted Mrs. Selby. "My own aunt Selby! What obligations am I under to you, and to our venerable Mrs. Shirley, for giving to an angel an angel's education, and conferring on me the blessing."

"Congratulate me, my dear cousin Holles's," saluting each. "May you both be as happy, whenever you alter your single estate, as I will endeavour to make your lovely cousin."

He withdrew with so much respectfulness to the happy Harriet as delighted us all.

Lucy went with him to pay her morning compliments to the two grandmammas.

"Sister," said Kitty Holles, after he was gone, "we never, never can think of marrying, after we have seen Sir Charles Grandison and his behaviour."

Lucy returned with Nancy. They embraced their cousin.

"Your grandmamma and my grandmamma, my dearest cousin, are impatient to see you in your grandmamma's chamber, and the gentlemen are crying out for their breakfasts in the great parlour." We hurried into Mrs. Shirley's apartment. The bride threw herself at her grandmamma's feet for her blessing. It was given in such a tender and pious manner that we were all affected by it. "The best of sons, of men," said she afterwards, "has but just left me. What a blessing to all around him is a good man. Sir Charles Grandison is everything. But, my dear loves," to the younger ladies, "let a good man, let life, let manners be the principal motive of your choice—in goodness will you have every sanction, and your fathers, mothers, relations, friends, every joy. My dearest child, my Harriet," taking her hand, "there was a time that I thought no man on earth could deserve you; now it is my prayer and will be that you may deserve this man. But let us join the gentlemen. Fear not, my Harriet. Sir Charles's character will preserve with every one its dignity, and give a sanction to the solemnity that has united you to him. My dearest love, be proud and look assured; you may, or who can? Yesterday's transaction is your glory. Glory in it, my Harriet."

We attended the two elder ladies down. Harriet, as bashful people ever do, increased her own difficulties by staying behind with her Lucy. We were all seated at the breakfast-tables, and stayed for them. Mr. Selby grew impatient, every one having declared themselves ready for breakfast. At last down came the blushing bride with her Lucy. Sir Charles, seeing Mr. Selby's countenance turning peevishly arch, just as he had begun, "Let me tell you, niece," and was coming out with something, he arose, and taking his bride's hand, led her to her seat. "Hush, my dear Mr. Selby," said he; "nobody must call to account my wife, and I present." "How, sir! How, sir! Already have I lost my niece?"

"Not so, Mr. Selby. All her duties will have strength given them by the happy event of yesterday; but you must

not let a new-married man see how much easier it is to find fault than to be faultless."

"Your servant, sir," replied Mr. Selby. "You'll one day pay for your complaisance, or my niece is not a woman. But I was ready primed. You have robbed me of a jest; and that, let me tell you, would have been more to me than my breakfast."

After breakfast Lucy gave us a lesson on the harpsichord. Sir Charles accompanied her finger at the desire of the company.

Lord and Lady W. excused themselves to breakfast, but came to dinner. We entertained one another with reports of what passed yesterday, what people said, how the tenants' feast was managed, how the populace behaved at the houses which were kept open. The churchwardens' list was produced of the poor recommended by them. It amounted to upwards of 140, divided into two classes—one of the acknowledged poor, the other of poor housekeepers and labouring people who were ashamed to apply, but to whom the churchwardens knew bounty would be acceptable. There were above thirty of these, to whom Sir Charles gave very handsomely, but we knew not what. The churchwardens, who are known to be good men, went away blessing him with hearts running over at their lips, as if they themselves were to find their account in his goodness.

Saturday.

We have had a smart debate this morning on the natural independency of our sex and the usurpation of the other. Particulars by-and-by.

My brother is an irresistible man. To-morrow he has carried it to make his appearance at church, against all their first intentions, and that by their own consents. He had considered everything; they had not. Mr. Beauchamp has letters which require him to go up to town. Lord and

Lady W. are desirous to get thither, his lordship having some gouty warnings. I am obliged to go up, having hated to set about anything preparatory to your case, Caroline. (If the wretch were to come in my way just now, I should throw my standish at him, I believe.) The Earl and Lady Gertrude are in town, and I am afraid of another reprimand. The Earl never jests but he means the same as if he were serious. I shall take Emily with me when I go. Mrs. Reeves wants to be with her little boy; yet all these people are desirous to credit the appearance. I had like to have forgot your good man. He longs to see his Caroline, and hopes to engage my brother to stand in person as his urchin's sponsor. So you see that there is a necessity to consent to make the appearance to-morrow, or the bride will lose the flower of her company.

God continue the happiness of this charming pair! Their behaviour to each other is just what I would wish it to be—tender, affectionate, without fulsome fondness. He cannot be more respectful to the dear creature now than he was before marriage; but from his present behaviour, I dare answer for him that he will not be less so, and yet he is so lively that he has all the young man in his behaviour, whenever occasions call for relaxation, even when subjects require seriousness, as they do sometimes, in conversations between Mrs. Shirley, Mrs. Selby, Mr. Deane, and him. His seriousness, as Mrs. Shirley herself observed in his absence, is attended with such vivacity, and intermingled with such entertaining illustrations, all naturally arising from and falling into the subject, that he is sure of every one's attention and admiration.

"The features of his manly face, and the turn of his fine eye," observed she, on another occasion, "are cast for pity and not for censure." And let me add a speech of his when he was called upon to censure a person on a slight representation of facts:—

"The whole matter is not before us," said he; "we know not what motives he may have to plead by way of extenuation, though he may not be able entirely to excuse himself. But, as it appears to me, I would not have done so."

But what, my dear, am I about? Are they not my brother's praises that I am expatiating upon? Was I ever to be trusted with that subject? "Is there no man," I have been asked, "that is like your brother?" He, I have answered, is most likely to resemble him, who has an unbounded charity and universal benevolence to men of all professions, and who, imitating the Divinity, regards the heart rather than the head, and much more than either rank or fortune, though it were princely, and yet is not a leveller, but thinks that rank or degree entitles a man who is not utterly unworthy of both, to respect.

I will write one more letter and then give way to other affairs.

I never thought I should have been such a scribbler; but the correspondence between my brother and Dr. Bartlett, into which we were all so eager to peep, that of this dear creature with her Lucy, which so much entertained us, and which led us in her absence to wish to continue the series of it; the story of Clementina so interesting, all our suspenses so affecting, and the state of this our lovely friend's heart so peculiar, and the desire of amusing you in your confinement—all these together led me on. But now one letter more shall conclude my task.

Lord L. has just now mentioned to his brother his wishes that he would stand godfather to the little lord. My brother caught his hand and besought his pardon for not offering himself. "You do me, my dear lord," said he, "both honour and pleasure. Where was my thought? But this dear creature," turning to his bride, "will be so good as to remind me of all my imperfections. I am in a way to mend, for the duties inseparable from my delightful new engagement will strengthen all my other duties."

"I have taken upon me, sir," said she, "to request the favour of my Lord and Lady L.'s acceptance of me for a godmother."

"To which I have objections," said I. "I have a prior claim. Aunt Eleanor has put in hers, Lady W. hers, and this before Miss Byron was Lady Grandison."

"Your circumstance, my dear Lady G., according to a general observation of our sex, is prohibitory."

"Will you, my brother," appealed I, "allow of superstitious observances, prognostics, omens, dreams?"

"Oh no! My Harriet has been telling me how much she suffered lately from a dream which she permitted to give strength and terror to her apprehensions from Mr. Greville. Guard, my dear ladies, against these imbecilities of tender minds. In these instances, if in no other, will you give a superiority to our sex, which, in the debate of this morning, my Charlotte would not allow of."

I will begin my next letter with an account of this debate, and if I cannot comprise it in the compass I intend to bring it into, my one more letter may perhaps stretch into two.

LETTER LV.—*Continuation of Lady G.'s letters to her sister, with a debate on the natural independence of females.*

LETTER LVI [vi]

MISS LUCY SELBY TO LADY L.

Sunday, November 19.

My dear Lady G. insists upon my writing to your ladyship, on account of the appearance which the loveliest couple in England made this day at church.

We all thought nothing could have added to the charms of our Harriet's person, but yet her dress and jewels did. I sighed, from pride for the honour of female beauty, to think they did. "Can my dear Harriet," thought I, "exquisitely lovely as she is in any dress, be ornamented by richer silks than common, by costly laces, by jewels? Can dress add grace to that admirable proportion and those fine features, to which no painter yet has ever done justice, though every family related to her has a picture of her, drawn by a different hand of eminence?"

We admired the bridegroom as much as we did her, when (before we could have thought he had been half ready) he joined Mrs. Shirley, my aunt Selby, and me, in the great parlour, completely dressed. But what we most admired in him was that native dignity and ease, and that inattentiveness to his own figure and appearance, which demonstrate the truly fine gentleman, accustomed, as he is, to be always elegant.

When his lady presented herself to him and to us, in all her glory, how did the dear creature dazzle us! We involuntarily arose, as if to pay our homage to her. Sir Charles approached her with rather an air of greater freedom than usual, as if he considered not the dress as having added to the value he has for her; yet, "Loveliest of women," he called her; and, taking her hand, presented her to her grandmamma. "Receive, and again bless, my angel," said he, "best of parents! How lovely! But what is even all this amazing loveliness to the graces of her mind? They rise upon me every hour. She hardly opens her lips, but I find reason to bless God and bless you both, my dear ladies: for God and you have given her goodness. My dearest life, allow me to say that this sweet person, which will be your perfection in every stranger's eye, is but a second in mine."

"Instruct me, sir," said she, "to deserve your love by

When his lady presented herself to him and to us, in all her glory, how did the dear creature dazzle us!

improving the mind you have the goodness to prefer, and no creature was ever on earth so happy as I shall be."

"My dear daughter," said her delighted grandmother, "you see, can hardly bear your goodness, sir. You must blame her for something to keep down her pride."

"Now you call upon me, madam," replied he, "I will tax her with a real fault. I open all my heart to her, as subjects occasionally offer: I want her to have a will and to let me know it. The frankest of all female hearts will not treat me with that sweet familiarity which banishes distance. You see, my dearest love, that I chide you before your parental friends and your Lucy."

"It is your own fault, sir, indeed it is. You prevent me in all my wishes. Awe will mingle with the love of persons who are under perpetual obligation. My dear two mammas, you must not blame me—you must blame Sir Charles; he takes away by his goodness, even the power of making suitable acknowledgments, and then complains I do not speak."

My uncle Selby came in. He stood looking upon my cousin for a few moments in silence, then broke out, "Sir Charles Grandison, you may indeed boast that you have for a wife the flower of the British world, as you once called her; and, let me tell you, niece, you have for a husband the noblest and gallantest of men. Happy, happy pair! say I. My dear Mr. Deane," said he, who just then entered, "if you will keep me in countenance, I will venture to salute that charming creature."

Sir Charles presented his bride to them both. With a bent knee she received their salutes. At that moment came in the three lords, who followed the example. Lord W. called her angel. Sir Charles looked delighted with the praises of his bride.

The rest of the company being come, we proceeded to church.

We were early, but the church was crowded. How were the charming couple admired on their alighting, and as they walked to their pew! Never did my cousin herself look so lovely. How charming looked the bridegroom! But he forgot not that humble deportment, full of reverence for the place and the divine offices, which seemed to make him absent for the time to that splendour and beauty which took every eye out of our own pew. His example was enough to give a proper behaviour, had it been needful, to every one in it.

I should have told your ladyship that Mr. Greville had sent over-night a sullenly complaisant request to my aunt, in writing, importing that, as he heard the bride would make her appearance on the morrow, the bride-men and maids, if it broke not into our ceremonial, would accept of his pew, which is over against ours, for the look of the thing, he said, though he could not promise but he should all the day curse the occasion. By this we found he was not gone to Lady Frampton's, as he had designed. His offer was thankfully accepted.

There was a great concourse of the genteelest people there. Everybody, men and women, looked delighted on the occasion. The humility of the bride was tried by the respects paid her between the offices by all who had ever been in her company. They should have reined in her own pride, for it was to that, as much as to respect to her, I doubt not, that their notice was owing. She looked conscious, bashful, sly, I told her afterwards. She hates the word; but, as I said, she should not have given the idea that made no other word so proper to express it, and which must be more observable in her generally open free countenance than in that of any other. She more than once saw devoirs paid her by a leer, when her sweet face was so disposed that, had she not returned the compliment, it might have passed that she had not seen them. But what an insensible must have been my cousin had she not

been proud of being Lady Grandison! She is not quite an angel yet; she has a few femalities, as my uncle whimsically calls our little foibles. So, perhaps, she should. But nobody saw the least defect in your brother. His dress most charmingly became him; and when he looked upon his bride, his eyes were fixed on her eyes with such a sweet benignity and complaisance, as if he saw her mind through them and could not spare a glance to her ornaments; yet by his own dress he showed that he was no stoical nonconformist to the fashion of the world. But the politeness and respect with which he treated her did them both credit, and credit (as Lady G. observed) to the whole sex. Such unaffected tenderness in his respect, and known to be so brave, so good a man! Oh, my dear Lady L., what an admirable man is your brother! What a happy creature is my Harriet!

When Divine service was over I was afraid our procession, as I may call it, would have been interrupted by the compliments of some of the gentry of our acquaintance, whose opened pew doors showed their readiness to address them; but all passed in silent respects from gentlemen and ladies. My cousin, when she came home, rejoiced that one of her parading times was over. "But when, my dearest love," said Sir Charles, "will the time be past that all who see you will admire you?"

The church in the afternoon was still more crowded than before. How were Sir Charles and my uncle blessed by the poor, and people of low degree, for their well-dispensed bounty to them!

My cousin has delighted Mrs. Shirley by telling her that Sir Charles had said there would be a rite wanting till he and she had communicated, according to the order of the Church, at the altar on this particular occasion.

Just now is everything settled that Sir Charles wished to be settled. Lady G. will acquaint you with particulars, I doubt not.

Permit me to commend myself to your ladyship's favour as one of the humblest and sincerest of your servants,

LUCY SELBY.

P.S.—Lady G. has half broke my heart.

On perusal of what I have written, she says I have not done my best. I have not given half particulars enough—in short, she finds a multitude of faults with me, even calls me names—"sorry girl," "lazy," and I can't tell what.

But do you, madam, acquit me, and I shall be easy.

I told her that I thought I had been very minute.

"What! to a lying-in woman," she says, "who has no variety before her! All one dull chamber-scene hourly acted over again—the subject so rich!"

I answered, "It should then have had the richest pen. Why did she not write herself? If it was not for laziness' sake, it was for self-sake that she did not. As I knew Lady L. would have been a gainer by the change of pen, I had much rather have been in the company for which she quitted the task than grubbing pens in my closet, and all to get nothing but discommendation."

I have shown her this my postscript. She raves, but I am hardened. She will soon have an opportunity to supply all my defects in person.

The seventh and last volume opens with descriptions of the close of the marriage festivities, a ball at Shirley Manor, &c. In passing through town on her way to Grandison Hall, Harriet, now Lady Grandison, attends the christening of Lady L.'s child.

Four more letters continue the description of the installation at, and arrangements of, Grandison Hall.

LETTER V [vii]

LADY GRANDISON TO MRS. SHIRLEY

GRANDISON HALL, *Saturday*, 12 *o'clock*, *December* 9.

OH, my dearest, dearest grandmamma! Here I am—the declared mistress of this spacious house, and the happiest of human creatures. This is all at this instant I can write.

. . . . . .

Lord and Lady W. honoured us, as they had promised, with their company, but detained us so long that we were obliged to lie one night on the road. But by eleven this morning we arrived here.

At our alighting, Sir Charles clasping me in his arms, "I congratulate you, my dearest life," said he, "on your entrance into your own house. The last Lady Grandison and the present might challenge the whole British nation to produce their equals." Then turning to every one of his guests, those of my family first, as they were strangers to the place, he said the kindest, the politest things that ever proceeded from the mouth of man. I wept for joy. I would have spoken, but could not. Everybody congratulated the happy Harriet.

Dr. Bartlett was approaching to welcome us, but drew back

till our mutual congratulations were over. He then appeared. "I present to you, my dear Dr. Bartlett," said the best of men, "the lovely friend whom you have so long wished to see mistress of this house." He then presented me to the doctor.

"God bless you, madam!"—tears in his eyes. "God bless you both!"—then kissed my offered cheek. He could say no more; I could not speak distinctly.

My dear Sir Charles led me, followed by all our rejoicing friends, through a noble dining-room to the drawing-room, called the lady's. "The whole house, my dear," said he, "and every person and thing belonging to it, is yours; but this apartment is more particularly so. Let what is amiss in it be altered as you would have it."

"Oh, sir!" grasping his presenting hand between both mine, was all I could say.

This room is elegantly furnished. It is hung with a light green velvet, delicately ornamented; the chairs of the same, the frames of them gilt, as is the frame of a noble cabinet in it. "My mother's, my dearest life," whispered he; "it will be always fashionable, and you, I know, will value it on her account." Indeed I shall. He presented me with the keys. "Here perhaps will you deposit your letters and correspondences, some of which (the continuation of those I have had the honour to see), you will allow me to peruse—but of choice, remember, madam. For your whole heart must be in the grant of the favours you will confer upon me of this kind."

"Dear sir," said I, "leave me power of speech: my will shall be yours in everything. But you will find a strange, strange heart laid open to you if you command from me a sight of the papers that probably will be reposited here when all my matters are brought from Northamptonshire."

"You shall have all the letters you ever wrote to me, and the venerable circle," said Lucy; "a loan, not a gift, if you will show them to Sir Charles."

"Courage, Lucy, not inclination, will be only wanting."

"Thank you, Lucy," said he. "Thank you, my love," to me. "You must make marks against the passages in the letters you shall have the goodness to communicate, which you would not have me read. I will give you my honour that I will not pass the bounds you prescribe."

I will snatch another opportunity to proceed. My dear Sir Charles indulges me. I have told him that, if he now and then misses me, he must conclude that I am doubling my joy, by communicating it as I have opportunity to my dear grandmamma.

. . . . . .

Everybody admires the elegance of this drawing-room. The finest japan china that I ever saw, except that of Lady G.'s, which she so whimsically received at the hands of her lord, took particularly every female eye.

Sir Charles led me into a closet adjoining. "Your oratory, your library, my love, when you shall have furnished it, as you desired you might, by your chosen collection from Northamptonshire."

It is a sweet little apartment: elegant book-cases unfurnished; every other ornament complete. How had he been at work to oblige me, by Dr. Bartlett's good offices, while my heart perhaps was torn, part of the time, with uncertainty!

The housekeeper, a middle-aged woman, who is noted, as you have heard her master say, for prudence, integrity, and obligingness, a gentlewoman born, appearing, Sir Charles presented her to me. "Receive, my love, a faithful, a discreet gentlewoman, who will think herself honoured with your commands. Mrs. Curzon" (to her), "you will be happy in a mistress who is equally beloved and reverenced by all who have the honour of her countenance, if she approve of your services, and if you choose to continue with us."

I took her hand: "I hope, Mrs. Curzon, there is no doubt

but you will. You may depend upon everything that is in my power to make you happy."

She looked pleased, but answered only with a respectful courtesy.

Sir Charles led the gentlemen out to show them his study. We just looked into a fine suite of rooms on the same floor, and joined them there.

We found my uncle and Mr. Deane admiring the disposition of everything, as well as the furniture. The glass cases are neat, and, as Dr. Bartlett told us, stored with well-chosen books in all sciences. Mr. Deane praised the globes, the orrery, and the instruments of all sorts, for geographical, astronomical, and other scientifical observations. It is ornamented with pictures—some, as Dr. Bartlett told us, of the best masters of the Italian and Flemish schools—statues, bustoes, bronzes; and there also, placed in a distinguished manner, are the two rich cabinets of medals, gems, and other curiosities, presented to him by Lady Olivia. He mentioned what they contained and by whom presented, and said he would show us at leisure the contents. "They are not mine," added he: "I only give them a place till the generous owner shall make some worthy man happy. His they must be. It would be a kind of robbery to take them from a family that, for near a century past, have been collecting them."

. . . . . .

Lucy says she will be very particular in her letters. This will take up time, especially as Lady G. and Lady L must see them in their way to Northamptonshire, though they will not detain them. I shall have an opportunity to send this to London on Monday. This makes me intent to snatch every opportunity of writing. It will otherwise be too long before you will hear from us by my hand.

I do not intend to invade this slow girl's province, yet I will give you a slight sketch of the house and apartments as I go along.

The situation is delightful. The house is very spacious. It is built in the form of an H, both fronts pretty much alike. The hall, the dining-parlour, two drawing-rooms—one adjoining to the study, the other to the dining-parlour (which, with the study, mentioned already, and other rooms, that I shall leave to Lucy to describe, make the ground-floor)—are handsome, and furnished in an elegant but not sumptuous taste, the hangings of some of them beautiful paper only. There is, adjoining to the study, a room called the music-parlour, so called in Sir Thomas's time, and furnished with several fine musical instruments. Sir Thomas was as great an admirer of music as his son, and a performer.

It is no news to you, madam, that Sir Charles shows a great regard to every thing, place, and disposition that was his father's, and not absolutely inconvenient, and inconsistent with the alterations he has thought necessary to make, and which Dr. Bartlett praises highly, and promises to particularise to me. We are to be shown this music-parlour by-and-by.

The dining-room is noble and well-proportioned: it goes over the hall and dining-parlour. It is hung with crimson damask, adorned with valuable pictures. The furniture is rich, but less ornamented than that of the lady's drawing-room.

The best bed-chamber, adjoining, is hung with fine tapestry. The bed is of crimson velvet, lined with white silk; chairs and curtains of the same. Two fine pictures, drawn by Sir Godfrey—one of Sir Thomas, the other of Lady Grandison—whole lengths, took my eye (with what reverence, that of my lady!). Lady L., Lady G., as girls, and Sir Charles as a boy of about ten years of age, made three other fine whole lengths. I must contemplate them when I have more leisure.

There is a fine suite of rooms on the first floor which we just stepped into, mostly furnished with damask.

Mrs. Curzon tells us that, on occasion, they make fifteen beds within the house, in which the best lord in the land need not disdain to repose. You remember, madam, that Sir

Two fine pictures, drawn by Sir Godfrey—one of Sir Thomas, the other of Lady Grandison.

Charles, in his invitation to the Italian family, tells them he has room to receive them. The offices, it seems, are exceedingly convenient.

The gardens and lawn seem from the windows of this spacious house to be as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance.[1]

[1] Miss Lucy Selby thus describes the situation of the house, and the park, gardens, orchards, &c., in one of her letters which does not appear:—

"This large and convenient house is situated in a spacious park which has several fine avenues leading to it.

"On the north side of the park flows a winding stream that may well be called a river, abounding with trout and other fish, the current quickened by a noble cascade, which tumbles down its foaming waters from a rock, which is continued to some extent in a ledge of rockwork rudely disposed.

"The park is remarkable for its prospects, lawns, and rich appearing clumps of trees of large growth, which must therefore have been planted by the ancestors of the excellent owner, who, contenting himself to open and enlarge many fine prospects, delights to preserve, as much as possible, the plantations of his ancestors, and particularly thinks it a kind of impiety to fell a tree that was planted by his father.

"On the south side of the river, on a natural and easy ascent, is a neat but plain villa, in the rustic taste, erected by Sir Thomas, the flat roof of which presents a noble prospect. This villa contains convenient lodging-rooms, and one large room in which he used sometimes to entertain his friends.

"The gardener's house is a pretty little building. The man is a sober, diligent man; he is in years, has a housewifely good creature of a wife. Content appears in the countenances of both. How happy must they be!

"The gardens, vineyard, &c., are beautifully laid out. The orangery is flourishing—everything indeed is that belongs to Sir Charles Grandison. Alcoves, little temples, seats are erected at different points of view; the orchard, lawns, and grass-walks have sheep for gardeners; and the whole being bounded only by sunk fences, the eye is carried to views that have no bounds.

"The orchard, which takes up near three acres of ground, is planted in a peculiar taste. A neat stone bridge in the centre of it is thrown over the river. It is planted in a natural slope, the higher fruit-trees, as pears, in a semicircular row first; apples at further distances next; cherries, plums, standard apricots, &c., all which in the season of blossoming, one row gradually lower than another, must make a charming variety of

My uncle once took my aunt out from the company in a kind of hurry. I saw his eyes glisten, and was curious, on her return, to know the occasion. This was his speech to her, unable to check his emotion: "What a man is this, Dame Selby! We were surely wanting in respect to him when he was among us. To send such a one to an inn! Fie upon us! Lord, be good unto me, how are things come about! Who would have thought it? Sometimes I wonder the girl is not as proud as Lucifer; at other times, that she is able to look him in the face."

To this convenient house belongs an elegant little chapel, neatly decorated. But Sir Charles, when down, generally goes to the parish church, of which he is patron.

The gallery I have not yet seen. Dr. Bartlett tells me it is adorned with a long line of ancestors.

. . . . . .

After dinner, which was sumptuous and well ordered, Sir Charles led us into the music-parlour. Oh, madam, you shall hear what honour was done me there! I will lead to it.

Several of the neighbouring gentlemen, he told us, are performers; and he hopes to engage them as opportunity shall offer. "My dear Dr. Bartlett," said he, "your soul is harmony; I doubt not but all these are in order—May I ask you, my Harriet?" pointing to the harpsichord. I instantly sat down to it. It is a fine instrument. Lord G. took up a violin; my

blooming sweets to the eye from the top of the rustic villa, which commands the whole.

"The outside of this orchard next the north is planted with three rows of trees, at proper distances from each other: one of pines, one of cedars, one of Scotch firs, in the like semicircular order, which, at the same time that they afford a perpetual verdure to the eye and shady walks in the summer, defend the orchard from the cold and blighting winds.

"This plantation was made by direction of Sir Thomas in his days of fancy. We have heard that he had a poetical, and, consequently, a fanciful taste."

uncle, a bass-viol; Mr. Deane, a German flute; and we had a little concert of about half-an-hour.

Here is a noble organ. When the little concert was over, he was so good himself, on my aunt's referring to him with asking eyes, to show us it was in tune.

We all seated ourselves round him on his preparing to oblige us, and he, with a voice admirably suited to the instrument (but the words, if I may be allowed to say so, still more admirably to the occasion), at once delighted and surprised us all, by the following lines:—

I

"Accept, great Source of ev'ry bliss,
The fulness of my heart,
Pour'd out in tuneful ecstasies,
By this celestial art.

II

My soul, with gratitude profound,
Receive a form so bright!
And yet, I boast a bliss beyond
This angel to the sight.

III

When charms of mind and person meet,
How rich our raptures rise!
The fair that renders earth so sweet,
Prepares me for the skies!"

How did our friends look upon one another as the excellent man proceeded! I was astonished. It was happy I sat between my aunt and Lucy. They each took one of my hands. Tears of joy ran down my cheeks. Every one's eyes congratulated me; every tongue but mine encored him. I was speechless. Again he obliged us. I thought at the time I had a foretaste of the joys of heaven! How sweet is the

incense of praise from a husband, that husband a good man, my surrounding friends enjoying it! How will you, madam, rejoice in such an instance of a love so pure and so grateful! Long, long may it be, for the sake of his Harriet, his and her friends, for the world's sake, before his native skies reclaim him!

He approached me with tender modesty, as if abashed by the applause he met with. But seeing me affected, he was concerned. I withdrew with my aunt and Lucy. He followed me. I then threw myself into his arms; and, had speech been lent me, would have offered him the fervent vows of a heart overflowing with love and gratitude.

LETTER VI [vii]

LADY GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

THE music-parlour—I can hardly mention it without breaking into raptures—is adorned with a variety of fine carvings, on subjects that do honour to poetry and music. Be it Lucy's task to describe them. Let me mention other instances of his tender goodness to one of the happiest creatures on earth.

You know, madam, Sir Charles, when in Northamptonshire, offered me my choice of servants of both sexes; and when I told him that I chose not to take with me any one of either but my Sally, he said that, when I came to Grandison Hall, where they would be all together, I should choose which of the men-servants I would more particularly call my own. "I have not, my dearest life," said he, "run into the taste of our modern gentry, for foreign servants any more than for foreign equipages. I am well served; yet all mine are of our own country."

And then he gave me the names, and an account of the qualities of each.

Frederic I had seen at Selby House, an observant, sensible-looking young man; I chose him. He called him in (my aunt Selby present). "All my servants, Frederic," said he, "are as much your lady's as mine; but you will devote yourself more particularly to her commands. I mean not, however, any distinction in your favour where you all equally merit distinction. The power, madam, of change or dismission through the house is entirely yours."

To-morrow I am to go over all the bridal ostentation again at the parish church. On Monday, Lady Mansfield and her family are to be here. "Your guests, my dear," said Sir Charles to me, "I hope, for a week at least." This was the first notice he gave of it to Lord and Lady W. What joy and gratitude appeared in her countenance upon it!

Tuesday, by general approbation (Sir Charles submitting the choice of the day to his company), we are to have the neighbouring gentry here to dinner, and for the rest of the day. Sir Charles has been long wished by them all to reside among them. He breaks through the usual forms, and chose this way at once to receive the visits of all his neighbours, and in both our names gave the invitation. He showed us a list of the persons invited. It is a very large one. "My dearest love," said he, "we shall be half familiarised to them, they to us, even to-morrow, by the freedom of this invitation for the Tuesday following."

Mrs. Curzon came to me for directions about the bed-chambers. I took that opportunity to tell her that I should add to the number of female servants only my Sally, of whose discretion I had no doubt. "You must introduce to me," said I, "at a proper time the female servants. If you, Mrs. Curzon, approve of them, I shall make no changes. I am, myself, the happiest of women; every one who deserves it shall find her happiness in mine."

"You will rejoice all their hearts, madam, by this early declaration of your goodness to them. I can truly say that the best of masters has not the worst of servants; but Dr. Bartlett would make bad servants good."

"I shall want no other proof," said I, "of their goodness than their love and respect to Dr. Bartlett."

In company of my aunt, Lady W., Lucy, Miss Jervois, attended by Mrs. Curzon, we went to choose our rooms, and those for our expected guests of Monday. We soon fixed on them. My aunt, with her usual goodness, and Lady W., with that condescension that is natural to her, took great notice of Mrs. Curzon, who seemed delighted with us all, and said that she should be the happier in the performance of her duty, as she had been informed we were managing ladies. It was a pleasure, she said, to receive commands from persons who knew when things were properly done. You, my dearest grandmamma, from my earliest youth, have told me that to be respected, even by servants, it is necessary to be able to direct them, and not be thought ignorant in those matters that it becomes a mistress of a family to be acquainted with. They shall not find me pragmatical, however, in the little knowledge I have in family matters.

Will nothing happen, my dear grandmamma? But no more of this kind. Shall I, by my diffidences, lessen the enjoyments of which I am in full possession? My joy may not be sufficient to banish fear, but I hope it will be a prudent one, which will serve to increase my thankfulness to Heaven, and my gratitude to the man so justly dear to me.

But do you, my grandmamma, whenever you pray for the continuance of your Harriet's happiness, pray also for that of Lady Clementina: that only can be wanting in my present situation to complete the felicity of

Your ever-grateful, ever-dutiful

HARRIET GRANDISON.

LETTER VII [vii]

LADY GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

Sunday, noon.

WHAT a crowded churchyard and church had I to pass through to the handsome seat which belongs to the excellent patron of it! How much exalted was I to hear his whispered praises! How did my Northamptonshire friends rejoice in the respectful approbation paid to the happy creature to whom they are more immediately related! I am always a little mortified by praises of my figure. What a transitory thing is outward form! May I make to myself a more solid and permanent foundation for that respect, which is generally more pleasing to a female heart than it ought to be!

Sir Charles was not unhappy in his invitation for next Tuesday. It took off, I imagine, some particular addresses to him; yet several gentlemen at his coach side acknowledged the favour done them in it.

My uncle, who, you know, madam, loves everything that promotes good neighbourhood, is greatly delighted with the thoughts of the day. How proud is he of his Harriet! How much more proud of his relation to the best of men!

I have looked upon what Lucy has written. I see there will be but little room for me to say anything. She is delighted with her task. It employs all her faculties; displays her fine taste in architecture, paintings, needle-works, shell-works. She will give you a description of several charming performances in the two latter arts of the late Lady Grandison. How does the character of that admirable lady rise upon us! With what emulation does it fire me! On twenty accounts it was a very bold thing, my grandmamma, for your Harriet to aspire to be Lady Grandison; yet how does Sir Charles's goodness, his kind acceptance of all my humble endeavours,

encourage me! Oh, madam, he said truth when, in courtship, he told me that I parted with power to have it returned me with augmentation. I don't know how it is, but his freedom of behaviour to me is increased; yet his respectfulness is not diminished. And, tender as he was before to me, his tenderness is still greater than it was, yet so much unaffected dignity in it that my reverence for him is augmented, but without any abatement of my love. Then his cheerfulness, his more than cheerfulness, his vivacity shows that he is at heart pleased with his Harriet. Happy Harriet! Yet I cannot forbear now and then, when my joy and my gratitude are at the highest, a sigh to the merits of Lady Clementina. "What I am now should she have been," think I often. The general admiration paid me as the wife of Sir Charles Grandison should have been paid to her. Lady L., Lady G. should have been her sisters. She should have been the mistress of this house, the co-guardian of Emily, the successor of the late excellent Lady Grandison. Hapless Clementina! What a strange thing, that adherence to religion in two persons so pious, so good, each in their way, should sunder, for ever sunder, persons whose minds were so closely united!

Sir Charles, by Lucy, invites me, till dinner is ready, to walk with them, at her request, in the gallery. Lucy wants, in describing that gallery, to give you, my dearest grandmamma (in whom every other of my friends is included), a brief history of the ancestors of Sir Charles, whose pictures adorn it. I come. Lord of my heart! I attend you.

. . . . . .

How, madam, would you have been delighted, could you have sat in this truly noble gallery, and seen the dear man, one arm round my waist, pointing sometimes with the other, sometimes putting that other arm round my Lucy's, and giving short histories of the persons whose pictures we saw.

Some of the pictures are really fine. One of Sir Charles's, which is drawn when he was about sixteen, is on horseback.

The horse, a managed, curveting, proud beast; his seat, spirit, courage admirably expressed: he must have been, as his sisters say he was, the loveliest and the most undaunted, yet most modest-looking of youths. He passed his own picture so slightly that I had not time to take in half the beauties of it. You will not doubt, madam, but I shall be often in this gallery, were only this one picture there.

What pleasure had I in hearing the history of this ancient family from this unbroken series of the pictures of it for so many generations past! "And will mine, one day," thought I, "be allowed a place among them, near to that of the most amiable of them all, both as to mind and figure?" How my heart exulted! What were my meditations as I traced the imagined footsteps of dear Lady Grandison, her picture and Sir Thomas's in my eye, as finely executed as those in the best bedchamber. "May I," thought I, "with a happier lot, be but half as deserving." But, madam, did not Lady Grandison shine the more for the hardships she passed through! And is it necessary for virtue to be called forth by trials in order to be justified by its fortitude under them? What trials can I be called to with Sir Charles Grandison? But may I not take my place on the footstep of her throne, yet make no contemptible figure in the family of her beloved son? I will humbly endeavour to deserve my good fortune, and leave the rest to Providence.

There are in different apartments of this seat, besides two in the house in town, no less than six pictures of Sir Thomas; but then two of them were brought from his seat in Essex. Sir Thomas was fond of his person. They are drawn in different attitudes. He appears to be, as I always heard he was, a fine figure of a man. But neither Lucy nor I, though we made not the compliment to Sir Charles, you may suppose (who always speaks with reverence and unaffected love of his father), thought him comparable in figure, dignity, intelligence to his son.

We were called to dinner before we had gone half-way through the gallery.

We had a crowded church again in the afternoon.

Sunday night.—This excellent Dr. Bartlett, and this excellent Sir Charles Grandison! I may say. Sir Charles, having inquired of the doctor, when alone with him, after the rules observed by him before we came down, the doctor told him that he had every morning and night the few servants attending him in his antechamber to prayers, which he had selected out of the Church service. Sir Charles desired him by all means to continue so laudable a custom, for he was sure master and servants would both find their account in it.

Sir Charles sent for Saunders and Mrs. Curzon. He applauded to them the doctor's goodness, and desired they would signify, the one to the men-servants, the other to the women, that he should take it well of them if they cheerfully attended the doctor, promising to give them opportunity as often as was possible. "Half-an-hour after ten, doctor, I believe is a good time in the evening?"

"That, sir, is about my time; and eight in the morning, as an hour the least likely to interfere with their business. Whenever it does, they are in their duty; and I do not then expect them."

About a quarter after ten the doctor slipped away. Soon after Sir Charles withdrew, unperceived by any of us. The doctor and his little church were assembled. Sir Charles joined them, and afterwards returned to company with that cheerfulness that always beams in his aspect. The doctor followed him with a countenance as serene. I took the doctor aside, though in the same apartment, supposing the matter, Sir Charles joining us. "Oh, sir," said I, "why was I not whispered to withdraw with you? Think you that your Harriet——"

"The company, my dearest love," interrupted he, "was not now to be broken up. When we are settled, we can

make a custom for ourselves that will be allowed for by everybody, when it is seen we persevere, and are in every other respect uniform. Joshua's resolution, doctor, was an excellent one.[1] The chapel, now our congregation is large, will be the properest place; and there perhaps the friends we may happen to have with us will sometimes join us."

Monday morning.—Sir Charles has just now presented to me, in Dr. Bartlett's presence, Mr. Daniel Bartlett, the doctor's nephew and his only care in this world, a young gentleman of about eighteen, well educated, and a fine accomptant, a master of his pen, and particularly of the art of shorthand writing. The doctor insisted on the specification of a salary, which he named himself to be £40 a year, and to be within the house, that he might always be at hand. He could not trust, he said, to his patron's assurances that his bountiful spirit would allow him to have a regard in the reward, only to the merit of the service.

Monday, noon.—Lady Mansfield, Miss Mansfield, and the three brothers are arrived. What amiable women, what agreeable young gentlemen, what grateful hearts, what joy to Lady W. on their arrival, what pleasure to Lord W., who, on every occasion, shows his delight in his nephew! All these things, with their compliments to your happy Harriet, let Lucy tell—I have not time.

What, my dear grandmamma, shall we do with Lord and Lady W.? Such a rich service of gilt plate—just arrived—a present to me! It is a noble present, and so gracefully presented; and I so gracefully permitted to accept of it by my best, my tenderest friend! Let Lucy describe this too.

Tuesday morning.—A vast company we shall have. Gentlemen and their ladies are invited; your Harriet is to be dressed. She is already dressed. How kindly am I complimented by every one of my friends. Let Lucy, let my aunt

[1] "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. xxiv. 15).

(she promises to assist Lucy) relate all that shall pass, describe the persons, and give the characters of our visitors, our managements, our entertainments, the ball that is to conclude the day and night. I shall not be able, I suppose, to write a line.

Wednesday, noon.—Our company left us not till six this morning. My uncle was transported with the day, with the night.

I will only say that all was happy; and decency, good order, and mirth went through the whole space. Sir Charles was everywhere and with everybody. Oh, how he charmed them all! Sir William Turner said once, behind his back, "Of what transports did my late friend Sir Thomas, who doted upon his son, deprive himself, by keeping him so long abroad!"

I could not but think of what my dear Lady G. once wrote, that women are not so soon tired as men with these diversions, with dancing particularly. By three, all but Sir Charles and my uncle seemed quite fatigued, but recovered themselves. My Emily delighted everybody. She was the whole night what I wished her to be. Dear madam, be not uneasy. We shall be very happy in each other.

Oh that you were with us, my dearest grandmamma! But you, from your cheerful piety and joyful expectation of happiness supreme, are already, though on earth, in heaven. Yet it is my wish, my aunt's, my uncle's, Lucy's, twenty times a day, that you were present and saw him—the domestic man, the cheerful friend, the kind master, the enlivening companion, the polite neighbour, the tender husband! Let nobody who sees Sir Charles Grandison at home say that the private station is not that of true happiness.

How charmingly respectful is he to my uncle, aunt, and good Mr. Deane! To Lucy he is an affectionate brother. Emily, dear girl, how she enjoys his tenderness to her!

My uncle is writing to you, madam, a letter. He says it will be as long as his arm. My aunt will despatch this day

a very long one. Theirs will supply my defects. Lucy is not quite ready with her first letter. If there were not so much of your Harriet in it, I would highly praise what she has hitherto written.

Thursday morning.—I leave to my uncle the account of the gentlemen's diversions in the gardens and fields. They are all extremely happy, but Lord G. already pines after his Charlotte. He will not be prevailed on to stay out his week, I doubt, sweet-tempered man! as I see him in a thousand little amiable instances. If Lady G. did not love him, I would not love her. Lord W. is afraid of a gouty attack. He is never quite free. He and his admirable lady will leave us to-morrow.

I think, my dear Lady G., with you, that discretion and gratitude are the corner-stones of the matrimonial fabric. Lady W. had no prepossessions in any other man's favour. My lord loves her. What must be that woman's heart that gratitude and love cannot engage? But she loves my lord. Surely she does. Is not real and unaffected tenderness for the infirmities of another the very essence of love? What is wanting where there is that? My Sir Charles is delighted with Lady W.'s goodness to his uncle. He tells her often how much he reveres her for it.

In our retired hours we have sometimes the excellent lady abroad for our subject. I always begin it. He never declines it. He speaks of her with such manly tenderness! He thanks me at such times for allowing him, as he calls it, to love her. He regrets very much the precipitating of her, yet pities her parents and brothers. How warmly does he speak of his Jeronymo! He has a sigh for Olivia. But of whom, except Lady Sforza and her Laurana, does he not speak kindly? And them he pities. Never, never was there a more expanded heart!

. . . . . .

Ah, madam, a cloud has just brushed by us. Its skirts

have affected us with sadness, and carried us from our sunshine prospects home ; that is to say, to thoughts of the general destiny. Poor Sir Harry Beauchamp is no more. A letter from his Beauchamp—Sir Charles showed it to me, for the honour of the writer, now Sir Edward. We admired this excellent young man together over his letter. What fine things did Sir Charles say on this occasion, both by way of self-consolation and on the inevitable destiny! But he dwelt not on the subject. He has written to Lady Beauchamp, and to the young baronet. How charmingly consolatory! What admirable— But Sir Charles, madam, is a Christian.

. . . . . .

This event has not at all influenced his temper. He is the same cheerful man to his company, to his Harriet, to everybody. I am afraid it will be the cause of his first absence from me. How shall I part with him, though it were but for two days?

Friday, noon.—Lady Mansfield and her sons, Lord G., and Lord and Lady W. have left us. Miss Mansfield is allowed to stay with me some time longer. Emily is very fond of her. No wonder: she is a good young woman.

We are busied in returning the visits of our neighbours, which Sir Charles promised to do, as if they were individually made to us. We have a very agreeable neighbourhood. But I want these visitings to be over. Sir Charles and his relations and mine are the world to me. These obligations of ceremony, though unavoidable, are drawbacks upon the true domestic felicity. One happiness, however, results from the hurry and bustle they put us in—Emily's mind seems to be engaged. When we are not quite happy in our own thoughts, it is a relief to carry them out of ourselves.

. . . . . .

Sir Charles and I have just now had a short conversation about this dear girl. We both joined in praising her, and

then I said I thought that some time hence Mr. Beauchamp and she would make a very happy pair.

"I have," said he, "a love for both. But as the one is my own very particular friend, and as the other is my ward, I would rather he found for himself, and she for herself, another lover, and that for obvious reasons."

"But suppose, sir, they should like each the other?"

"So as they made it not a compliment to me, but gave me reason to believe that they would have preferred each the other to every one else, were they strangers to me, I would not stand in their way. But the man who hopes for my consent for Emily, must give me reason to think that he would have preferred her to any other woman, though she had a much less fortune than she is mistress of."

"I am much mistaken, sir, if that may not be the case of your friend."

"Tell me, my nobly frank and ever amiable Harriet, what you know of this subject. Has Beauchamp any thoughts of Emily?"

"Ah, sir," thought I, "I dare not tell you all my thoughts, but what I do tell you shall be truth.—I really, sir, don't imagine Emily has a thought of your Beauchamp."

"Nor of any other person. Has she?"

"Lady G., Lady L., and myself are of opinion that Beauchamp loves Emily."

"I am glad, my dear, if anything were to come of it, that the man loved first."

I was conscious. A tear unawares dropped from my eye. He saw it. He folded his arm about me, and kissed it from my cheek. "Why, my love! my dearest love! why this?" and seemed surprised.

"I must tell you, sir, that you may not be surprised. I fear, I fear——"

"What fears my Harriet?"

"That the happiest of all women cannot say that her dear man loved her first."

He folded me in his kind arms. "How sweetly engaging," said he. "I will presume to hope that my Harriet, by the happiest of all women, means herself. You say not No; I will not insult your goodness so much as to ask you to say Yes. But this I say, that the happiest of all men loved his Harriet before she could love him; and, but for the honour he owed to another admirable woman, though then he had no hope of ever calling her his, would have convinced her of it by a very early declaration. Let me add that the moment I saw you first (distressed and terrified as you were, too much to think of favour to any man), I loved you; and you know not the struggle it cost me (my destiny with our dear Clementina so uncertain) to conceal my love. Cost me! who ever was punctiliously studious to avoid engaging a young lady's affections, lest I should not be able to be just to her, and always thought what is called Platonic love an insidious pretension."

"Oh, sir!" and I flung my fond arms about his neck, and called him the most just, the most generous of men.

He pressed me still to his heart; and when I raised my conscious face, though my eye could not bear his, "Now, sir," said I, "after this kind, this encouraging acknowledgment, I can consent—I think I can—that the lord of my heart shall see, as he has more than once wished to see, long before he declared himself, all that was in that forward, that aspiring heart."

Lucy had furnished me with the opportunity before. I instantly arose, and took out of a drawer a parcel of my letters, which I had sorted ready, on occasion, to oblige him; which, from what he had seen before, down to the dreadful masquerade affair, carried me to my setting out with his sisters to Colnebrook.

I think not to show him farther, by my own consent, because of the recapitulation of his family story, which

immediately follows, particularly including the affecting accounts of his mother's death, his father's unkindness to the two young ladies, Mrs. Oldham's story, the sisters' conduct to her, which might revive disagreeable subjects.

"Be pleased, sir," said I, putting them into his hands, "to judge me favourably. In these papers is my heart laid open."

"Precious trust," said he, and put the papers to his lips; "you will not find your generous confidence misplaced."

An opportunity offering to send away what I have written, here, my dearest grandmamma, concludes,

Your ever dutiful

HARRIET GRANDISON.

LETTER VIII [vii]

LADY GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

Saturday morning, December 16.

I WILL not trouble you, my dear grandmamma, with an account of the preparations we are making to benefit and regale our poorer neighbours, and Sir Charles's tenants, at this hospitable season. Not even Sir Charles Grandison himself can exceed you, either in bounty or management, on this annual solemnity. Sir Charles has consulted with Dr. Bartlett, and everything will be left to the direction of that good man. My uncle and aunt have despatched their directions to Selby House, that their neighbours and tenants may not suffer by their absence.

The gentlemen are all rid out together, the doctor with them, to reconnoitre the country, as my uncle calls it. Emily and Lucy are gone with them on horseback. My aunt and I declined accompanying them, and took this opportunity, attended by Mrs. Curzon, to go through the offices.

In the housekeeper's room I received the maid-servants,

seven in number; and, after her, called each by her name, and spoke kindly to them all. I told them how handsomely Mrs. Curzon spoke of them, and assured them of my favour. I praised the cheerfulness with which Dr. Bartlett had told me they attended him every day in his ante-chamber. They should have the opportunity given them, I said, as often as possible. I hoped that my Sally behaved well among them.

They praised her.

"Sally," said I, "has a serious turn. Piety is the best security in man and woman for good behaviour. She will seldom fail of attending the doctor with you. We shall all be happy, I hope. I am acquainting myself with the methods of the house. Nobody shall be put out of their good way by me."

My aunt said, "My niece proposes to form herself on the example of the late excellent Lady Grandison."

They blessed me, tears in their eyes.

I made each of them a present for a pair of gloves.

We went through all the offices, the lowest not excepted. The very servants live in paradise. There is room for everything to be in order; everything is in order. The offices so distinct, yet so conveniently communicating—charmingly contrived! The lower servants, men and women, have laws, which, at their own request, were drawn up by Mrs. Curzon, for the observance of the minutest of their respective duties, with little mulcts, that at first only there was occasion to exact. It is a house of harmony to my hand. Dear madam, what do good people leave to good people to do? Nothing!—every one knowing and doing his and her duty, and having, by means of their own diligence, time for themselves.

I was pleased with one piece of furniture in the housekeeper's room, which neither you, madam, nor my aunt, have in yours. My aunt says Selby House shall not be long after her return without it. It is a servants' library in three classes: one of books of divinity and morality; another for housewifery; a third of history, true adventures, voyages, and innocent

amusement. I., II., III. are marked on the cases, and the same on the back of each book, the more readily to place and replace them, as a book is taken out for use. They are bound in buff, for strength. A little fine is laid upon whoever puts not a book back in its place. As new books come out, the doctor buys such as he thinks proper to range under these three classes.

I asked if there were no books of gardening. I was answered that the gardener had a little house in the garden in which he had his own books. But her master, Mrs. Curzon said, was himself a library of gardening, ordering the greater articles by his own taste.

Seeing a pretty glass case in the housekeeper's apartment filled with physical matters, I asked if she dispensed any of those to the servants or the poor. "Here is," said she, "a collection of all the useful drugs in medicine; but does not your ladyship know the noble method that my master has fallen into since his last arrival in England?"—"What is that?"—"He gives a salary, madam, to a skilful apothecary, and pays him for his drugs besides (and these are his, though I have a key to it); and this gentleman dispenses physic to all his tenants who are not able to pay for advice, nor are the poor who are not his tenants refused, when recommended by Dr. Bartlett."

"Blessings on his benevolence!" said I. "Oh, my aunt, what a happy creature am I! God Almighty, if I disgrace not my husband's beneficence, will love me for his sake."—"Dear creature," said my aunt, "and for your own too, I hope."

"There lives in a house, madam," continued Mrs. Curzon, "within five miles of this, almost in the middle of the estate, and pays no rent, a very worthy young man, brought up under an eminent surgeon of one of the London hospitals, who has orders likewise for attending his tenants in the way of his business, as also every casualty that happens within distance, and where another surgeon is not to be met with. And he, I

understand, is paid, on a cure actually performed, very handsomely; but if the patient die, his trouble and attendance are only considered according to the time taken up, except a particular case requires consideration."

"And this surgeon, Mrs. Curzon, this apothecary——"

"Are noted, madam, for being good as well as skilful men. My master's test is that they are men of seriousness and good livers: their consciences, he says, are his security."

"How must this excellent man be beloved, how respected, Mrs Curzon!"

"Respected and beloved, madam! Indeed he is. Mr. Saunders has often observed to me that if my master either rides or walks in company, though of great lords, people distinguish him by their respectful love. To the lord they will but seem to lift up their hats, as I may say; or if women, just drop the knee and look grave, as if they paid respect to his quality only; but to my master they pull off their hats to the ground and bow their whole bodies; they look smilingly, and with pleasure and blessings, as I may say, in their faces: the good women courtesy also to the ground, turn about when he has passed them, and look after him—'God bless your sweet face,' and 'God bless your dear heart,' will they say; and the servants who hear them are so delighted. Don't your ladyship see how all his servants love him as they attend him at table? How they watch his eye in silent reverence—indeed, madam, we all adore him, and have prayed morning, noon, and night for his coming hither, and settling among us. And now is the happy time: forgive me, madam, I am no flatterer, but we all say he has brought another angel to bless us."

I was forced to lean upon my aunt. Tears of joy trickled down my cheeks. Oh, madam, what a happy lot is mine!

My uncle wonders I am not proud. Proud, madam! Proud of my inferiority!

We visited Mr. Bartlett in his new office. He is a modest,

ingenious young man. I asked him to give me, at his leisure, a catalogue of the servants' library, for my aunt.

"Oh, my dear," said my aunt, "had your grandfather, had your father, your mother lived to this day!"

"I will imagine," said I, "that I see them looking down from their heaven. They bid me take care to deserve the lot I have drawn; and tell me that I can only be more happy when I am what and where they are."

. . . . . .

Dr. Bartlett, attended by his servant, returned without the gentlemen. I was afraid he was not very well. I followed him up, and told him my apprehensions.

He owned afterwards that he was a little indisposed when he came in, but said I had made him well.

I told him what had passed between Mrs. Curzon and me. He confirmed all she said.

He added that Sir Charles was careful also in improving his estates. The minutest things, any more than the greatest, escaped not his attention. "He has," said he, "a bricklayer, a carpenter, by the year; a sawyer, three months constantly in every year. Repairs are set about the moment they become necessary. By this means he is not imposed upon by encroaching or craving tenants. He will do anything that tends to improve the estate, so that it is the best conditioned estate in the country. His tenants grow into good circumstances under him. Though absent, he gives such orders as but few persons on the spot would think of. He has a discernment that goes to the bottom of everything. In a few years, improving only what he has in both kingdoms, he will be very rich, yet answer the generous demands of his own heart upon his benevolence. All the people he employs he takes upon character of seriousness and sobriety, as Mrs. Curzon told you; and then he makes them the more firmly his by the confidence he reposes in them. He continually, in his written directions to his master-workmen, cautions them to do justice

to the tenants as well as to him, and even to throw the turn of the scale in their favour. 'You are,' says he, 'my friends, my workmen; you must not make me both judge and party. Only remember that I bear not imposition. The man who imposes on me once I will forgive, but he never shall have an opportunity to deceive me a second time, for I cannot act the part of a suspicious man, a watchman over people of doubtful honesty.'"

The doctor says he is a great planter, both here and in Ireland; and now he has come to settle here, he will set on foot several projects which hitherto he had only talked of or written about.

"Sir Charles, I am sure," said he, "will be the friend of every worthy man and woman. He will find out the sighing heart before it is overwhelmed with calamity.

"He proposes, as soon as he is settled, to take a personal survey of his whole estate. He will make himself acquainted with every tenant and even cottager, and inquire into his circumstances, number of children, and prospects. When occasions call for it, he will forgive arrears of rent; and if the poor men have no prospect of success, he will buy his own farms of them, as I may say, by giving them money to quit. He will transplant one to a less, another to a larger farm, if the tenants consent, according as they have stock or probability of success in the one or the other, and will set the poor tenants in a way of cultivating what they hold, as well by advice as money; for while he was abroad, he studied husbandry and law, in order, as he used to say, to be his father's steward—the one to qualify him to preserve, the other to manage his estate. He was always prepared for and aforehand with probable events."

"Dear Dr. Bartlett," said I, "we are on a charming subject; tell me more of my Sir Charles's management and intentions. Tell me all you know that is proper for me to know."

"Proper, madam! Everything he has done, does, and intends to do is proper for you and for all the world to know. I wish all the world were to know him as I do—not for his sake, but for their own."

That moment (without anybody's letting me know the gentlemen were returned) into the doctor's apartment came Sir Charles. My back was to the door, and he was in the room before I saw him. I started, and looked, I believe, as if I thought excuses necessary.

He saw my silly confusion. That and his sudden entrance abashed the doctor. Sir Charles reconciled us both to ourselves. He put one arm round my waist, with the other he raised my hand to his lips, and in the voice of love, "I congratulate you both," said he; "such company, my dearest life, such company, my dearest friend, you cannot have every hour! May I, as often as there is opportunity, see you together; I knew not that you were. The doctor and I, madam, stand not upon ceremony. Pardon me, doctor. I insist upon leaving you as I found you."

I caught his hand as he was going. "Dear, dear sir, I attend you. You shall take me with you: and, if you please, make my excuses to my aunt for leaving her so long alone before you came in."

"Doctor, excuse us both; my Harriet has found, for the first time, a will. It is her own, we know, by its obligingness."

He received my offered hand, and led me into company, where my aunt called me to account for leaving her, and begged Sir Charles would chide me.

"She was with Dr. Bartlett, madam," said he; "had she been with any other person, man or woman, and Mrs. Selby alone, I think we would have tried to chide her."

What obliging, what sweet politeness, my dear grandmamma!

Such, madam, is the happiness of your Harriet.

Lucy has an entertaining letter to send you. From that letter you will have a still higher notion of my happiness, of Sir Charles's unaffected tenderness to me, and of the approbation of a very genteel neighbourhood than myself could give you.

Lady G. and Lady L. have both made up for their supposed neglects. I had written to each to charge them with having not congratulated me on my arrival here. Two such affectionate letters—I have already answered them. They love as well as ever (thank Heaven they do!), your

HARRIET GRANDISON.

LETTERS IX.–XIX. (Vol. vii.) *contain varieties, the most important of which is the news that Lady Clementina has given her family the slip and is supposed to have set out for England. Sir Charles writes to his wife, telling her that he has found a letter from her rival.*

LETTER XX [vii]

LADY CLEMENTINA TO SIR CHARLES GRANDISON

(*Mentioned in the preceding*)

Tuesday, February 13, *O.S.*

BY this time it is very probable you have heard of the rashest step that the writer of these presents, chequered and unhappy as the last years of her life have been, ever took. She knows it to be rash; she condemns herself for taking it. She doubts not but she shall be condemned by everybody for it; nor is she sure that she shall have the better opinion of your justice, if you are not one of the severest of her censurers; for you

are a good man. Your goodness, I hear, fills every mouth in this your own country, and it is not one of your least praises that you did your duty, in the strictest manner, to a father who was wanting in his to his whole family. It is, it seems, your principle that, where a duty is reciprocal, the failure in it of the one acquits not the other for a failure in his. How then can I appear before you? I am covered with blushes at the thoughts of it—I, who am a runaway from the kindest, the most indulgent of parents. God forgive me! Yet can I say I repent? I think I can. But at best it is a conditional repentance only that I boast.

I am here in your England—I cannot, cannot tell you where—in a low condition, my fortune scanty, my lodgings not very convenient, two servants only my attendants: Laura (you remember her) one, weeping every hour after her friends and our Italy; my other you know not. My page he was called in the days of my state, as I may comparatively call them, but now my everything. Poor youth! But he is honest, he is faithful. God reward him! I cannot.

Yet in all this my depression of circumstances, if I may so express myself, and sometimes (too often, indeed) of spirits, I think I am happy in the thought that I am a single woman.

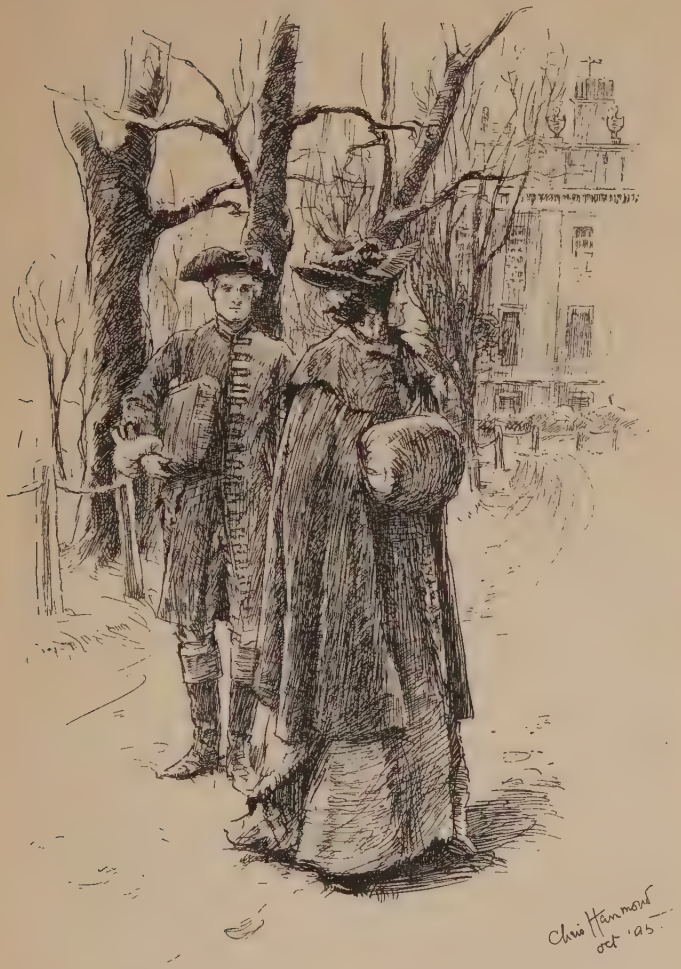
Well, sir! And what can I say further? A thousand things I have to say: too many to know which to say first. I had better say no more. I am not, however, sure I shall send you this or any other letter.

I have been ten days in this great, and, as it seems to me, ugly city: a vastly populous one; people very busy. I thought your London people were all rich—but what is this to write to you about?

I have been out but once, and that for an airing in one of your parks. I can't say I like England nor its people much; but I have seen nothing of the one or the other

I live a very melancholy life; but that befits me best.

They tell me that your churches are poor, plain things.



I have been out but once, and that for an airing in one of your parks.

You bestow more upon yourselves than you do upon your God. But perhaps you trust more to the heart than to the eye, in the plainness of your places of devotion. But, again, what is all this stuff to you? Yet I am apt to ramble too, too much.

The truth is, I am not very well: so excuse me.

But do you know how it comes about that, having the best of fathers, the best of mothers, the most affectionate of brothers, I should yet think them persecutors? How it comes about that I, who love them, who honour them as much as daughter ever honoured parents, or sister ever loved brothers, should run away from them all into a strange land, a land of heretics, yet once be thought a pious kind of creature! Do you know how this comes about?

Once there was a man—but him I renounced—but I had a good reason for it; and do you think I repent it? By my truth, chevalier, I do not: I never did. Yet I think of nobody half so often, nor with half the pleasure: for, though a heretic, he is a good man.

But hush! Dare I, in this country, say he is a heretic? Perhaps we Catholics are looked upon as heretics here. Idolaters I know we are said to be—I grant that I had like to have been an idolater once. But let that pass. I believe we Catholics think worse of you Protestants, and you Protestants think worse of us Catholics than either deserve. It may be so, but to me you seem to be a strange people for all that.

Of one thing, my good chevalier, methinks I should be glad. Here I am told you are married: that I knew before I left Italy; else, let me tell you, I never would have come hither; yet I should have got away rather than be married myself, I believe; but then perhaps it would have been to a Catholic country.

What was I going to say? One thing I should be glad of: it is to see your lady, but not if she were to see me. I came with very few clothes, and they were not the best I had at

Florence: my best of all are at Bologna. My father and mother loved to see me dressed. I dressed many a time to please them more than to please myself; for I am not a proud creature: do you think I am? You knew me once better than I knew myself; but you know little of me now. I am a runaway, and I know you won't forgive me. I can't help it. However, I should be glad to see your lady. She dresses richly, I suppose: well she may!

I am told she is one of the loveliest women in England; and as to her goodness—there is nobody so good. Thank God! You know, chevalier, I always prayed that the best of women might be called by your name.

But Olivia, it seems, praises her; and Olivia saw her when she was a rambler to England, as, God help me! I am now.

But Olivia's motive and mine were very different. Olivia went to England in hopes of a husband. Poor woman! I pity her.

But, chevalier, cannot I see your lady and she not see me? I need not be in disguise to see her. If you were with her, handing her, suppose, to church (I would not scruple to crowd myself into some unobserved corner of your church on such an occasion), you would be too proud of her to mind me; and you would not know me if you saw me, for I would stoop in my shoulders, and look down, and the clothes I should have on would be only an English linen gown and petticoat, unadorned by ribands or gew-gaw—not half so well dressed as your lady's woman.

But yet I should thank God that you had not disgraced the regard I had once for you. I had a great deal of pride, you know, in that hope. Thank you, sir, that you have married so lovely and so deserving a woman. She is of a good family, I hope.

It was a great disappointment to me, when I came first to London, to find that you were not there. I thought, somehow or other, to catch a sight of you and your lady, were it

but as you step into your coach, and I to have been in a chair near, or even on foot; for, when I heard what a character you bore for every kind of goodness, I, a poor fugitive, was afraid to see you. So many good lessons as you taught me, and all to come to this! Unhappy Clementina!

"Where will your ladyship" (but I have forbidden that style) "choose to take up your residence?" said Antony, when we first landed (my servant's name is Antony; but you shall not know his other name). We landed among a parcel of guns, at the Tower, they called it, in a boat.

Laura answered for me, for he spoke in Italian: "Somewhere near the Chevalier Grandison's, won't you, madam?" I won't tell you what was my answer, for perhaps I am near the Thames. I don't want you to find me out. I beseech you, chevalier, don't give yourself pain for me. I am a fugitive. Don't disgrace yourself in acknowledging any acquaintance with a creature who is poor and low, and who deserves to be poor and low; for is she not a runaway from the best of parents? But it is to avoid, not to get a husband; you'll be pleased to remember that, sir.

But, poor Laura—I am sorry for Laura, more sorry than for myself. My brother Giacomo would kill the poor creature, I believe, if ever she were to come in his way. But she is in no fault. It was with great reluctance she obeyed her mistress. She was several times as impertinent as Camilla. Poor Camilla! I used her hardly. She is a good creature. I used her hardly against my own nature, to make her the easier to part with me. I love her. I hope she is well. It is not worth her while to pine after me; I was an ungrateful creature to her.

My Antony is a good young man, as I told you. I think to save half his wages, and give the other half to raise Laura's, to keep her a little in heart. The poor young man hoped preferment in my service, and I can do nothing for him. It will behove me to be a good manager. But I will sell the

few jewels I have left, rather than part with him till he can get a better service. What little things do I trouble you with! Little things to you; but not quite so little to me now, as I have managed it. But so as I can do justice to this poor youth and poor Laura, I matter not myself. What I have done is my choice: they had no option. I over-persuaded Laura, as my friends would have done me. I feel that sting: it was not doing as I would be done by. Very, very wicked in me! I dare say you would tell me so, were you to find me out.

But, chevalier, shall I send you—yes or no—this scrawl, written to divert me in a pensive mood? I would not, if I thought it would trouble you. God forbid that your pupil Clementina should give you discomposure, now especially in the early part of your nuptials! Yet if I could so manage as that you would permit your secretary (I would not ask the favour of your own pen) to send a few lines to some particular place, where my servant could fetch them unknown to you or anybody, only to let me know if you have heard from Bologna, or Naples, or Florence (I was very ungrateful to good Mrs. Beaumont and the ladies her friends), and how they all do—my father, mother (my heart at times bleeds for them), my dear Jeronymo, my two other brothers, and good Father Marescotti, and my sister-in law, whom I have so much reason to love: it will be a great ease to my heart, provided the account be not a very melancholy one. If it should, poor Clementina's days would be numbered upon twice five fingers.

I am put in a way. This shall be sent to your palace in town. You will order your secretary to direct his letter, "To George Trumbull, Esq.; to be left till called for, at White's Chocolate House in St. James's Street." I depend upon your honour, chevalier, that you will acquiesce with my desire to remain *incognito*, till I shall consent to reveal to you the place of my abode, or to see you elsewhere. I sign only

CLEMENTINA.

LETTERS XXI.–XXV. *contain further correspondence between Sir Charles and Clementina, which ends in the following interview.*

LETTER XXVI [vii]

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON TO LADY GRANDISON

Monday, February 19.

YOU requested me, my dearest Harriet, to write minutely to you. Now I have been admitted to the presence of Clementina and have hopes that she will soon recover her peace of mind, I can the more cheerfully obey you.

I was exactly at the hour at the appointed place. Laura guessed at my chair and my servants as they crossed the way, and stood out on the pavement, that I might see her. When she found she had caught my eye, she ran into the house, wringing her clasped hands. "God be praised! God be praised!" were her words, as I followed her in, in her own language. Laura can speak no other. "Show me, show me to your lady, good Laura," said I with emotion.

She ran up one pair of stairs before me. She entered the dining-room, as it is called. I stopped at the stairs-head till I had Clementina's commands. Laura soon came out. She held open the door for me, courtesying in silence.

The drawn window-curtains darkened the room; but the dignity of Clementina's air and motion left me not in doubt. She stood up, supporting herself on the back of an elbow-chair.

Taking her trembling hand, "Welcome, thrice welcome to England, dearest Lady Clementina!"

I pressed her hand with my lips and seated her, for she

trembled—she sobbed—she endeavoured to speak, but could not for some moments.

I called to Laura, fearing she was fainting.

"Oh, that well-known voice," said she: "and do you, can you bid me welcome? Me, a fugitive, an ingrate, undutiful! Oh, chevalier, lower not your unsullied character by approving so unnatural a step as that which I have taken."

"I do bid you welcome, madam. Your brother, your friend, from his soul, welcomes you to England."

"Let me know, chevalier, before another word passes, whether I have a father, whether I have a mother."

"Blessed be God! madam, you have both."

She lifted up her clasped hands. "Thank God! God, I thank Thee! Distraction would have been my portion if I had not. I was afraid to ask after them. I should have thought myself the most detestable of parricides if either of them had been no more."

"They are in the utmost distress for your safety. They will think themselves happy when they know you are well, and in the protection of your brother Grandison."

"Will they, sir? Oh, what a paradox! They so indulgent, yet so cruel—I so dutiful, yet a fugitive. But tell me, sir—determined as I was against entering into a state I too much honour to enter into it with a reluctant heart, could I take any other step than that I have taken to free myself from the cruelty of persuasion? Oh that I might have been permitted to take the veil! But answer my question, chevalier?"

"Surely, madam, they would not have compelled you. They always declared to me they would not."

"Not compelled me, sir! Did not my father kneel to me? My mother's eyes spoke more than her lips could have uttered. The bishop had influenced good Father Marescotti (against the interests of religion, I had almost said) to oppose the wish of my heart. Jeronymo—your Jeronymo—gave into their measures. What refuge had I? Our Giacomo was inexorable.

I was to be met, on my return from Florence to Bologna, by the Count of Belvedere and all those of his house. The general was to be in his company. I had secret intelligence of all this; and I was to be received as an actual bride at Bologna, or made to promise I would be so within a few days after my arrival. My sister-in-law, my only advocate among my Italian friends, pitied me, it is true; but for that reason she was not to be allowed to come to Bologna. I was at other times denied to go to Urbino, to Rome, to Naples —could I do otherwise than I have done, if I would avoid profaning a sacrament?"

"My dearest sister Clementina sometimes accuses herself of rashness for taking a step so extraordinary. At this moment does she not receive her brother in darkness? Whence this sweet consciousness? But what is done is done. Your conscience is a law to you. If that accuse you, you will repent: if it acquit you, who shall condemn? Let us look forward, madam. I approve not of the vehemence of your friends' persuasions. Yet what parents ever meant a child more indulgence, what brothers a sister more disinterested affection?"

"I own, sir, that my heart at times misgives me. But answer me this: Are you of opinion I ought, at the instance of my parents and brothers, however affectionate, however indulgent in all other instances, to marry against inclination, against justice, against conscience?"

"Against any one of these you ought not."

"Well, sir, then I will endeavour to make myself easy as to this article. But will you undertake, sir (a woman wants a protector), to maintain this argument for me?"

"I will, madam, and shall hope for the more success if you will promise to lay aside all thoughts of the veil."

"Ah, chevalier!"

"Will my dearest sister answer me one question? Is it not your hope that, by resisting their wishes, you may tire out

opposition, and at last bring your friends to consent to a measure to which they have always been extremely averse?"

"Ah, chevalier! But if I could get them to consent——"

"Dear madam, is not their reasoning the same—if they could get you to consent?"

"Ah, chevalier!"

"May not this be a contention for months, for years? and——"

"I know, sir, your inference: you think that in a contention between parents and child, the child should yield. Is not that your inference?"

"Not against reason, against justice, against conscience. But there may be cases in which neither ought to be their own judge."

"Well, sir, you that have yielded to a plea of conscience (God has blessed you, and may God continue to bless you, for it)——"

"Admirable Clementina!"

"Are fit to be a judge between us. You shall be mine, if ever the debate be brought on."

"No consideration in that case shall bias me. But may I not hope that the dear lady I stand before will permit me to behold a person whose mind I ever revered?"

"Laura," said she, "let the tea be got ready: I have been taught to drink tea, sir, since my arrival. The gentlewoman of the house is very obliging. Permit me, sir, to withdraw for a few moments."

She sighed as she went out, leaning upon Laura.

Laura returned soon after with lights. She set them on the table, and, giving way to a violent emotion, "Oh, Milord Grandison," said the poor girl, falling down and embracing my knees, "for the Blessed Virgin's sake, prevail on my lady to return to dear, dear Bologna!"

"Have patience, Laura; all will be well."

"I, the unhappy Laura, shall be the sacrifice. The general

will kill me. Oh that I had never accompanied my lady in this expedition!"

"Have patience, Laura. If you have behaved well to your lady, I will take you into my protection. Had you a good voyage? Was the master of the vessel, were his officers obliging?"

"They were, sir; or neither my lady or I should have been now living. Oh, sir, we were in a dying way all the voyage, except the three last days of it. The master was the civilest of men."

I asked after her fellow-servant, naming him from Jeronymo's letters. "Gone out" was the answer, "to buy some necessaries. O sir, we live a sad life. Strangers to the language, to the customs of the country: all our dependence is upon this young man."

I asked her after the behaviour and character of the people of the house (a widow and her three daughters), that if I heard but an indifferent account of them I might enforce by it my intended plea to get her to Lady L.'s. Laura spoke well of them. The captain of the vessel who brought them over is related to them, and recommended them when he knew what part of the town her lady chose.

What risks did the poor lady run! Such different people as she had to deal with in the contrivance and prosecution of her wild scheme, yet all to prove honest; how happy! Poor lady! how ready was she to fly from what she apprehended to be the nearest evil. But she could not be in a capacity to weigh the dangers to which she exposed herself.

"Often and often," said Laura, "have I, on my knees, besought my lady to write to you. But she was not always well enough to resolve what to do; and when she was sedate she would plead that she was afraid to see you: you would be very angry with her; you would condemn her as a rash creature: and she could not bear your displeasure. She was conscious that the act she had done bore a rash and even

a romantic appearance. Had you been in town, Antony should have made inquiries at distance, and she might have yielded to see you; but for several days her thoughts were not enough composed to write to you. At last, being impatient to hear of the health of her father and mother, she did write."

"Why stays she so long from me, Laura? Attend your lady, and tell her that I beg the honour of her presence."

Laura went to her. Her lady presented herself with an air of bashful dignity. I met her at her entrance. "My sister, my friend, my dearest Lady Clementina," kissing her hand, "welcome, welcome, I repeat, to England. Behold your fourth brother, your protector; honour me with your confidence; acknowledge my protection. Your honour, your happiness is dear to me as my life."

I led her trembling, sighing, but at the moment speechless, to a seat, and sat down by her, holding both her hands in mine. She struggled for speech. "Compose yourself, madam; assure yourself of my tenderest regard, of my truest brotherly affection."

"Generous Grandison! Can you forgive me? Can you from your heart bid me welcome? I will endeavour to compose myself. You told me I was conscious: conscious indeed I am. The step I have taken has a disgraceful appearance, but yet will I not condemn, nor consent that you should, my motive."

"I condemn not your motive, madam. All will, all must be happy. Rely on my brotherly advice and protection. My sisters and their lords, every one I love, admire you. You are come to families of lovers who will think themselves honoured by your confidence."

"You pour balm into the wounds of my mind. What is woman when difficulties surround her! When it was too late, and the ship that I embarked in was under sail, then began my terror: that took away from me all power of countermanding

the orders I had given, till the winds that favoured my voyage opposed my return. Then was I afraid to trust myself with my own reflections, lest if I gave way to them my former malady should find me out. But let me not make you unhappy; yet permit me to observe that, when you mentioned the kind reception I might expect to meet with among your friends, you forbore to mention the principal person. What will she think of the poor Clementina? But be assured, and assure her that I would not have set my foot on the English shore, had you not been married. Oh, chevalier, if I make you and her unhappy, no creature on earth can hate me so much as I shall hate myself."

"Generous, noble Clementina! Your happiness is indeed essential to that of us both. My Harriet is another Clementina. You are another Harriet. Sister-excellences I have called you to her, to all her relations. In the letter you favoured me with, you wished to know her; you must know her; and I am sure you will love her. Your wishes that she would accept of my vows were motives with her to make me happy. She knows our whole history. She is prepared to receive you as the dearest of her sisters."

"Generous Lady Grandison! I have heard her character. I congratulate you, sir. You have reason to think that I should have been grieved had you not met with a woman who deserved you. To know you are happy in a wife, and think yourself so, that no blame lies upon me for declining your addresses, will contribute more than I can express to my peace of mind. When I have more courage, and my heart is eased of some part of its anguish, you shall present me to her. Tell her meantime that I will love her, and that I shall hold myself everlastingly bound to her in gratitude for making happy the man whom once, but for a superior motive, I had the vanity to think I could have made so."

She turned away her glowing face, tears on her cheek. My admiration of her greatness of mind, so similar to that of

my own Harriet, would not allow me to pour out my heart

She turned away her glowing face, tears on her cheek.

in words. I arose, and taking both her hands, bowed upon

them. Tears more plentifully flowed from her averted eyes, and we were both for one moment speechless.

It would be injurious to a mind equally great and noble as that which informs the person of this your sister-excellence, to offer to apologise for faithfully relating to you those tender emotions of hearts, one of them not less pure than my Harriet's, the other all your own.

I broke silence, and urged her to accept of apartments at Lady L.'s. "Let me acquaint the gentlewoman of the house, I beseech you, madam, that to-morrow morning the sister I have named, and I, will attend you to her house. We will thank her for you, as you have almost forgotten your English, for the civilities which she and her daughters have shown you; and I will make it my business to find out the honest captain, who, Laura tells me, has been very civil to you also, and thank him too, in the names of all our common friends, for his care of you."

"I will think myself honoured, now you have encouraged me to look up, by a visit from either or both your sisters. But let me advise with you, sir: Is the kind offer you make me a proper offer for me to accept of? I shall be ready to take your advice, little regard as I may seem, by the step I have taken, to have had for my own honour: I would avoid, if possible, suffering a first error to draw me into a second. Do you, sir, as my brother and friend, take care of that honour in every step you shall advise me to take."

"Your honour, madam, shall be my first care. I sincerely think this is the rightest measure you can now pursue."

"Now pursue!" sighing.

This argument admitted of a short debate. She was scrupulous from motives too narrow for a Clementina to mention. I made her blush for mentioning them; and, in a word, had the happiness to convince her, that the protection of the sister of her fourth brother was the most proper she could choose.

I went down, and talked to the gentlewomen.

I requested them to make my compliments to Captain Henderson, and desire him to give me an opportunity to thank him in person for his civility to a lady beloved by all who have the honour of knowing her.

I went up again to the lady, and sat with her most of the evening, Laura only attending us.

I talked to Clementina of Mrs. Beaumont and the ladies of Florence, and intimated that her mother had prevailed on that lady to come to England, in hopes, as she is an Englishwoman, that her company would be highly acceptable to her. She blessed her mother! What an instance of forgiving goodness was this, she said, with tears of gratitude, and blessed Mrs. Beaumont for her goodness to her, and the ladies at Florence for parting with one so dear to them.

I was happy throughout this latter conversation in her serenity; not one instance of wandering did I observe.

I chose not, however, so early, to acquaint her with the intention of the dearest and nearest of her friends, to come over with Mrs. Beaumont; though I expressed my earnest hope that if we could make England agreeable to her, I should have the honour of the promised visit from some of the principals of her family, before she left it.

This, my dearest life, is a minute account of our interview. One of the greatest pleasures I can know is to obey the gentle, the generous commands of my Harriet.

This morning I attended Lady L. to breakfast with the excellent lady, as proposed. My sister and her lord are charmed with their guest. Their guest she is, and Lady Clementina is as much pleased with them. She is every hour more and more sensible of the danger she has run, and censures herself very freely for the rash step, as she calls it herself.

She longs, yet is ashamed to see you, my dearest life, and listens with delight to the praises my Lord and Lady L. so justly give to my Harriet.

Monday afternoon.

I have introduced Lord and Lady G. to Lady Clementina, at her own request, being assured, she said, that the place of her refuge would be kept secret by all my friends, both sisters occasionally joining in praising my angel. "How happy," said she, "are those marriages which give as much joy to the relations on both sides as to the parties themselves!"

Adieu, my dearest love. With the tenderest affection I am, and ever will be,

Your most faithful and obliged

CHARLES GRANDISON.

The next few letters concern the love affairs of "the suckling Emily," as Lady G. had once called Miss Jervois, but they lead up to this more interesting one.

LETTER XXX [vii]

LADY GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

Saturday, March 3.

LADY Clementina, my dearest grandmamma, must not, shall not be compelled. If I admired, if I loved her before, now that I have seen her, that I have conversed with her, I love, I admire her, if possible, ten times more. She is really in her person a lovely woman, of middle stature, extremely genteel; an air of dignity, even of grandeur, appears in her aspect and in all she says and does; her complexion is fine without art: indeed she is a lovely woman! She has the finest black eye, hair, eyebrows of the same colour, I ever saw; yet has sometimes a wildish cast with her eye, sometimes

a languor, that, when one knows her story, reminds one that her head has been disturbed. Why, taking advantage of her sex, is such a person to be controlled and treated as if she were not to have a will, when she has an understanding perhaps superior to that of either of her wilful brothers?

When we alighted at Lady L.'s, I begged Sir Charles to conduct me into any apartment but that where she was. I sat down on the first seat. Lady L. hastened to me. "My dearest sister, you seem disordered—Fie!—Lady Grandison, and want spirits."

Sir Charles (not observing my emotion) had left me, and went to attend Lady Clementina. She, it seems, was in some disorder. "My Harriet," said he to her, as he told me afterwards, "attends the commands of her sister-excellence."

"Call me not excellence! call me not her sister! Am I not a fugitive in her eye, in everybody's eye? I think, chevalier, I cannot see her. She will look down upon me. I think I am as much afraid to see her as I was at first to see you. Is there severity in her virtue?"

"She is all goodness, all sweetness, madam. Did I not tell you that she is the Clementina of England?"

"Well, sir, you are very good. Don't let me be unpolite. I am but a guest in this hospitable house, else I would have attended her at the first door. Is she not Lady Grandison? Happy, happy woman!"

Tears were in her eyes. She turned away to hide them. Then stepping forward: "I am now prepared to receive her; pray, sir, introduce me."

"She is not without her emotions, madam; she is preparing herself to see you. Love, compassion for Lady Clementina fills her bosom: I will present her to you."

Lady L. went to her. Sir Charles came to me. "My dearest love, why this concern? You will see a woman you cannot fear, but must love. She has been in the like agitations. Favour me with your hand."

"No, sir, that would be an insult to her."

"My dearest life! forget not your own dignity" (I started), "nor give me too much consequence with a lady who, like yourself, is all soul. I glory in my wife; I cannot desert myself."

I was a little awed at the time; but the moment I got home and was alone with him, I acknowledged his goodness and greatness, both in one.

He led me in. Lady L. only (at Sir Charles's request, for both our sakes) was present. The noble lady approached me. I hastened to meet her with trembling feet. Sir Charles, kissing a hand of each, joined them together. "Sister-excellences I have often called you! Dearest of women, love each other as I admire you both."

She tenderly saluted me. "Receive, oh! receive to your love, to your friendship, a poor desolate! Till within these few days, a desolate indeed! a fugitive! a rebellious! an ingrate to the best of parents!"

I embraced her. "Mistaken parents I have called them, madam. I have pitied them; but most I have pitied you. Honour me with your sisterly love. This best of men had before given me two sisters. Let us be four."

"Be it so, my dear Lady L.," said Sir Charles, bringing her to us; and, clasping his arms about the three, "you answer for the absent Charlotte and yourself, a fourfold cord that never shall be broken."

Sir Charles led us to one sofa, again putting a hand of each together, and sitting down over-against us, Lady L. on the other hand of him. We were both silent for a few moments, each struggling with her tears.

"My Harriet, madam," said Sir Charles, "as I have told you, knows your whole story. You two are of long acquaintance. Your minds are kindred minds; your griefs are hers; your pleasures she will rejoice in as her own. My Harriet, you now see, you now know by person, the admirable

Sir Charles, kissing a hand of each, joined them together.

Clementina, whose magnanimity you so much admired, whose character, you have so often said, is the first among women."

We both wept; but her tears seemed tears of kindness and esteem. I put the hand which was not in hers on her arm. I wanted courage; my reverence for her would not allow me to be so free, or it had again embraced the too conscious lady. "Believe me, madam (excuse my broken Italian), I have ever revered you. I have said often, very often, that your happiness, happy as I am, is necessary to complete mine, as well as Sir Charles Grandison's."

"This goodness to me, a fugitive, an alien to your country, not a lover of your religion! Oh, Lady Grandison, you must be as much all I have heard of you in your mind as I see you are in your person. Receive my thanks for making happy the man I wished to be the happiest of men, for well does he deserve to be made so. We were brother and sister, madam, before he knew you. Let me be his sister still, and let me be yours."

"Kindred minds Sir Charles Grandison calls ours, madam. He does me honour. May I on further knowledge appear to as much advantage in your eye as you, from what I know of you, do in mine, and I shall be a very happy creature."

"Then you will be happy. I was prepared to love you. I love you already, methinks, with a passion that wants not further knowledge of your goodness to augment it. But can you, madam, look upon me with a true sisterly eye? Can you pity me for the step I have taken, so seemingly derogatory to my glory? Can you believe me unhappy, but not wicked, for taking it? Oh, madam, my reason has been disturbed. Do you know that? You must attribute to that some of my perversenesses."

"Heaven, dearest Lady Clementina, only knows how many tears your calamity has cost me; in the most arduous cases I have preferred your happiness to my own. You shall know all of me and of my heart. Not a secret of it, though

yet uncommunicated to this dearest of men, will I conceal from you. I hope we shall be true sisters and true friends to the end of our lives."

"My noble Harriet," said the generous man. "Frankness of heart, my dear Clementina, is her characteristic. She means all she says, and will perform more than she promises. I need not tell you, my love, what our Clementina is; you know her to be the noblest of women: give her the promised proofs of your confidence in her, and, whatever they may be, they must draw close the knot which never will be untied."

"Already thus encouraged," said the noble lady, "let me apply to you, madam, to strengthen for me the interest I presume to have in the friendship of Sir Charles Grandison. Let me not, sir, let me not, I entreat you all three, be compelled to give my vows to any man in marriage. All of you promise me, and I shall with more delight look before me, than for a long, long time past, I thought would fall to my lot."

"You, madam, must concede a little, perhaps; your parents must a little relax. Their reason, if you will not be too unconceding, shall not, if I am referred to, be mine, unless it is reason in every other impartial judgment. Would to Heaven they were at hand to be consulted!"

"What a wish! Then you would give me up! You are a good man: will a good man resist the authority of parents in favour of a runaway child? Dear, dear madam," clasping her arms about me, "prevail upon your Chevalier Grandison to protect me, to plead for me. He can deny you nothing; he will then protect me, though my father, my mother, my brothers should all join to demand me of him."

"My dear Lady Clementina," said I, "you may depend on your own interest with Sir Charles Grandison. He has your happiness at heart, and will have, as much as I wish him to have mine."

"Generous, noble, good Lady Grandison! how I admire

you! May the Almighty shower upon you His choicest blessings! If you allow me an interest in his services, I demand it of you, chevalier."

"Demand it, expect it, be assured of it, my dear Lady Clementina. I want to talk with you upon your expectations, your wishes. As much as is practicable, whatever they are they shall be mine."

"Well, sir, when then shall we talk? To-morrow will be too soon for my spirits."

"Do my Harriet then the honour of passing the day on Monday with her. The dear friends we have for our guests will choose to pass it with Lord and Lady G. Yourself, Lady L., my Harriet, and I, will be all the company; you shall declare your pleasure, and that shall be a law to me. At present this affecting interview has discomposed us all, and we will retire."

"Kindly considered," said she; "you are in England what you were in Italy; I am discomposed. I have discomposed you, madam" (to me). "I was born to give trouble to my friends. Forgive me! I once was happy. I may hope, madam" (to Lady L.), "your supporting presence at your brother's on Monday?"

Lady L. bowed her assent. She understands Italian, but speaks it not.

The lady stood up, yet trembling. "I will withdraw, ladies, sir, if you please. My head seems as if bound round by a tight cord," putting her hand to her forehead. Then clasping her arms round me, thus in a high strain spoke she: "Angel of a woman, gracious as the Blessed Virgin Mother, benign, all that is good and great, I attend you on Monday. Adieu!"

She kissed my cheek, I clasped my arms about her. "Revered Lady Clementina!" I could say no more. Tears and tenderness of accent interrupted my speech. Lady L. conducted her to her own apartment, and left her to her Laura.

We sat down, admiring, praising her. "Dear sir," said I, taking Sir Charles's hand, "Lady Clementina must not be persuaded. Persuasion is compulsion. Why comes over the Count of Belvedere? If she knows it, I will not answer for her right mind."

My uncle and aunt, Lucy, Emily, were very curious after particulars, when we came home, as we did to supper.

Sir Charles left it to Lady L. to manage with Lady G., who, he knew, expected a day of our beloved guests; and he himself apologised to them for the freedom he had taken of so disposing of them. They had the goodness to thank him for his freedom. They long, however, to see the admirable lady who could renounce the man of her choice from religious motives, yet love him still; fly to him for protection, yet be able to congratulate him on his marriage and love his wife. "She is great indeed," said my aunt. Lucy praised my generosity — but what is that which is called generosity in me, who am in full possession of all my wishes, to that of Clementina?

Join, my dear grandmamma, in prayers for her happiness; the rather as in it, from true affection, is included that of your

HARRIET GRANDISON.

LETTERS XXXI.–XXXIX. *contain further interviews between Clementina and Harriet, and the arrival of the Porretta family in England. Arrangements are made between them and their truant child. Lady G. has a daughter. Greville proposes to Lucy Selby (for whom Sir Rowland Meredith has previously made overtures in the interest of his still shy nephew), and is refused.*

LETTER XL [vii]

LADY GRANDISON TO MRS. SHIRLEY

Saturday, March 31.

Now, my dear grandmamma, let me give you some account of what passed yesterday.

The articles signed and witnessed were put into Lady Clementina's hand, and a pen given her, that she might write her name in the presence of all her surrounding friends here.

Never woman appeared with more dignity in her air and manner. She was charmingly dressed, and became her dress. A truly lovely woman! But every one by looks seemed concerned at her solemnity. She signed her name, but tore off deliberately their names; and kissing the torn bit, put it in her bosom, then throwing herself on her knees to her father and mother, who stood together, and presenting the paper to the former, "Never let it be said that your child, your Clementina, has presumed to article in form with the dearest of parents. My name stands: it will be a witness against me if I break the articles which I have signed. But in your forgiveness, my lord—in yours, madam—and in a thousand acts of indulgence, I have too much experienced your past to doubt your future goodness to me. Your intention, my ever honoured parents, is your act. I pray to God to enable your Clementina to be all you wish her to be. In the single life only indulge me. Your word is all the assurance I wish for: I will have no other."

They embraced her. They tenderly raised her between them, and again embraced her.

"I would not, methinks, sir," said she, turning to Sir Charles, "for the first time see the Count of Belvedere before all this company, though I revere every one in it. Is the count in the house?"

"He is in my study, madam."

"Will my mamma," said she, turning to her, "honour me with her presence?"

She gave her hand to Sir Charles, and took mine. Jeronymo followed her, and Sir Charles led her into the next room. "Too great solemnity in all this!" whispered the marquis to Father Marescotti. She courtesied invitingly to Mrs. Beaumont; she also followed her.

Sir Charles, seating her and the marchioness, by the young lady's silent permission went into his study, and, having prepared the count to expect a solemn and uncommon reception, introduced him. He approached her, profoundly bowing; a sweet blush overspread her cheeks. "You, my Lord of Belvedere," said she, "are one of those my friends to whom I am in some measure accountable for the rash step which brought me into this kingdom, because it has induced you to accompany my brothers, whom you have always honoured with your friendship. Forgive me for any inconveniences you have suffered on this occasion."

"What honour does Lady Clementina do me to rank me in the number of the friends to whom she thinks herself accountable! Believe me, madam——"

"My lord," interrupted she, "I shall always regard you as the friend of my family and as my friend. I shall wish your happiness—I do wish your happiness as my own; and I cannot give you a stronger proof that I do than by withholding from you the hand which you have sought to obtain with an unshaken, and, my friends think, an obliging perseverance, quite through an unhappy malady, which ought to have deterred you for many sakes, and most for your own. My dear mamma," throwing herself at her feet, "forgive me for my perseverance. It is not altogether owing (I hope it is not at all owing) to perverseness, and to a wilful resistance of the wills and wishes of all my friends, that I have withstood you. Two reasons influenced me when I declined another

hand: religion and country, a double reason, was one; the unhappy malady which had seized me was another. Two reasons," rising with dignity, and turning from her weeping mother, "also influence me with regard to the Count of Belvedere, though neither of them are the important articles of religion and country. I own to you, before these my dearest friends, and let it be told to every one whom it concerns to know it, that justice to the Count of Belvedere is one. What a wretch should I be if I gave my hand to a man who had not the preference in my heart which is a husband's due! And should I, who had an unhappy reason to refuse one worthy man for his own sake, perhaps for the sakes of the unborn (I will speak out on this important occasion), not be determined to do as much justice to another? In one word I refused to punish the Chevalier Grandison." ("Madam," to me, "you know my story.") "What has the Count of Belvedere done that I should make no scruple to punish him? My good lord, be satisfied with my wishes for your happiness. I find myself at times very, very wrong. I have given proofs but too convincing to all my friends that I am not right. While I so think, conscience, honour, justice (as I told you once before, my good chevalier) compel me to embrace the single life. I have, in duty to my nearest friends, given up the way I should have chosen to lead it in. Let me try to recover myself in their way. My dearest, dearest mamma" (again dropping on her knees to her), "I will endeavour to make all my friends happy in the way they have agreed to make me so. Pray for me, all my friends," looking round her, tears in big drops trickling down her cheeks. Then rising, "Pray for me, my Lord of Belvedere. I will for you, and that you may do justice to the merit of some worthier woman, who can do justice to yours."

She hurried from us in a way which showed she was too much elevated for her bodily powers. Sir Charles besought Mrs. Beaumont to follow her. Mrs. Beaumont took my hand.

We found the lady in the study: she was on her knees and in tears. She arose at our entrance, each of us hastening to give her a hand. "Oh, my dear Lady Grandison," said she, "forgive me. Am I, am I wrong, my dear Mrs. Beaumont? Tell me, have I behaved amiss?"

We both applauded her. Well we might! If her greatness be owing to a raised imagination, who shall call it a malady? Who, but for the dear lady's own sake, would regret the next to divine impulse by which, on several occasions, she has shown herself actuated?

She suffered herself to be led to her mother, who embracing her (Clementina again kneeling to her): "My dearest child, my blessed daughter, we all of us, while such are your apprehensions, must acquiesce with your reasons. Be happy, my love, in your own magnanimity. I glory in my child."

"And I in my sister," said the noble Jeronymo. "Saint! angel!" kneeling to her on one knee, notwithstanding his lameness, "I next to adore my sister."

She called him her brother, her true brother; then taking my hand, "And will you, Lady Grandison," said she, "be my sister? Shall Sir Charles Grandison be my brother? Will you return with us into Italy? Shall we cultivate on both sides a family friendship to the end of our lives?"

I threw my arms about her neck, tears mingling on the cheeks of both. "It will be my ambition, my great ambition, to deserve the distinction you give me. My sister, my friend, the sister of my best friend, love him as he honours you, and me for his sake, as I will you for your own, as well as for his to the end of my life."

Sir Charles clasped his arms about us both. His eyes spoke his admiration of her, and his delight in each. "Angels" he called us. Then seating us, he took the count's hand, and leading him to her, "Let me, madam, present to you the Count of Belvedere, as a man equally to be pitied and esteemed. He yields to your magnanimity with a greatness of mind like

We found the lady in the study : she was on her knees and in tears.

your own. Receive, then; acknowledge the friend in him. He will endeavour to forego a dearer hope."

"Then will I receive him as my friend. I thank you, my lord, for the honour you have so long done me. May you be happy with a woman who can deserve you! See that happy pair before you! May you be as happy as Sir Charles Grandison! What greater felicity can I wish you?"

He took her hand; on one knee he raised it to his lips. "I will tear from you, madam, a tormentor. I must ask nothing of you; but, for myself, I can only promise, in the words of the Chevalier Grandison, to endeavour to forego a dearer, the dearest hope."

The count arose, bowing to her with profound respect; his eyes full, as his heart seemed to be. Signor Jeronymo motioned to return to the company. Lady Clementina wished to retire with me till what had passed was related to the rest. I led her to my closet; there did we renew our vows of everlasting friendship.

Sir Charles, thinking the relation would be painful to the count, withdrew with him into his study. Mrs. Beaumont and Signor Jeronymo told those who were not present at the affecting scenes what had passed.

When we were summoned to dinner, every one received Lady Clementina as an angel. They applauded her for her noble behaviour to the count, and blessed themselves for having taken the resolution of coming to England; and most of all they blessed my dear Sir Charles, to whom they ascribed all their opening happy prospects, and promised themselves that his family and theirs would be as much one as if the alliance, once so near taking place, had actually done so.

Sir Charles, at and after dinner, urged the carrying into execution the latter part of his beneficent plan. He offered to attend them to the drawing-room, to the play, to the oratorios (and took that opportunity to give the praises which everybody allows to be due to Mr. Handel), and to every

place of public entertainment which was worthy the notice of foreigners, and left it to their choice whether they would go first to Grandison Hall, or satisfy their curiosity in or about town.

The marquis said that, as Sir Charles and I were brought out of the country by the arrival of their Clementina and our expectation of them, he doubted not but it would be most agreeable to us to return to our own seat, adding politely that the highest entertainment they could have would be the company and conversation of us and our friends, and that rather at our own seats than anywhere else. The public diversions, he was pleased to say, might take their attention afterwards. Now they were here, they would not be in haste to return, provided Sir Charles and his friends would answer the hope he had given of accompanying them back to Italy.

There is no repeating the polite and agreeable things that were said on all sides.

Thus, then, my dear grandmamma, to cut short, it was at last agreed :—

The Count of Belvedere, who all the afternoon and evening received the highest marks of civility and politeness from the admirable Clementina (which, by the way, I am afraid will not promote his cure), proposes, with Signors Sebastiano and Juliano, to pass a month or six weeks in seeing everything which they shall think worthy of their notice in and about this great city ; and then, after one farewell visit to us, they intend to set out together for the court of Madrid, where the count intends to stay some months.

We shall all set out on Monday next for Grandison Hall.

Lord and Lady L. will follow us in a week or fortnight.

"How will the poor dear Charlotte mutter!" whispered Lady L. to me ; "but she and her lord will join us as soon as possible."

Mrs. Eleanor Grandison loves not the hall, because of the hardships she received from the late owner of it, Sir Thomas,

and thinks herself bound by a rash vow which she made the last time she was there never again to enter its gates.

Lady Clementina whispered me more than once how happy she should think herself in these excursions, and hoped all their healths would be established by them. She said the sweetest, the most affectionate things to me. Once she said, bidding me call her nothing but "my Clementina," that she should be happy if she were sure I loved her as much as she loved me. I assured her, and that from my very heart, that I dearly loved her.

Surely it was a happy incident, my dear grandmamma, that Lady Clementina took a step which, though at first it had a rash appearance, has been productive of so much joy to all round (to the poor Count of Belvedere excepted), and, in particular, to

Your ever dutiful, ever grateful,
HARRIET GRANDISON.

In LETTERS XLI.–XLVIII. *the Selby family discourse of love, and further descriptions of the happy pair at Grandison Hall are given. Lady G. arrives there. Her sister-in-law falls ill, and is attended by Clementina.*

LETTER XLIX [vii]

LADY GRANDISON. IN CONTINUATION

Saturday night.

I HAVE a constant attendant in Lady Clementina. She was not to be consoled when I was at worst. Wringing her hands, "Oh that she had never come to England!" was her frequent exclamation; and they apprehended that her mind would be

again disturbed. She has not yet recovered her former sedateness. She gets by herself when she is not with me. She is often in tears, and wishes herself in Italy. Sir Charles is concerned for her. She has something upon her mind, he says, and asked me if she had not disclosed it to me. He wondered she had not, expressing himself with pleasure on the confidence each has in the other.

Sunday, May 13.

Signor Jeronymo has been pitying to me the Count of Belvedere. The poor man could not prevail upon himself to accompany Sir Charles and his noble guests down. He owned to Jeronymo that he had twice set out for Grandison Hall, but both times, being unable to pursue his intention, turned back.

Jeronymo told me that the count had made his will, and left all that he could leave and his whole personal estate to their family, in case he should die unmarried. He would not leave it to Lady Clementina, lest, if his bequests were to come to her knowledge, she should think he was so mean as to expect that favour from his riches of which he had no hope from her esteem.

"The generous Belvedere declares," said Jeronymo, "that should her malady be renewed by means of our interesting ourselves in his favour, he should be the most miserable of men. 'My dear Jeronymo,' said he, at parting in town, 'tell that angel of a woman that I never will solicit her favour while I shall have reason to apprehend she has an aversion to me. May Clementina be happy, and Belvedere must have some consolation from knowing her to be so, however wretched he may be on the whole. But assure yourself, Jeronymo, that I will never be the husband of any other woman while she is unmarried.'"

I join with Signor Jeronymo in pitying the count, yet I must own that my compassion is still more deeply engaged

for Clementina. But I was affected not a little, however, when Jeronymo read a passage from a letter of the count, which at my request he left with me, and which I English as follows; after his supplications put up to Heaven for her happiness, whatever became of him—"But can she be happy," says he, "in her present situation? May there not be always a struggle between her exalted notion of duty and her passion (though the noblest that ever warmed a human breast) which may renew the disorders of her mind? Were she mine (let me indulge, for one moment, the rapturous supposition), I could hope to conduct, to guide, to compose that noble mind. We would admire with an equal affection that best of men, whose goodness is not more the object of her love than of my veneration. Jealous as I am of my honour, I would satisfy the charmer of my soul that I approved of her sisterly love of a man so excellent. She would not then be left to the silent distress of her own heart."

What say my grandmamma, my aunt, my Lucy? Shall I wish the noble Clementina may be prevailed upon in favour of this really worthy man? Should I, do you think, be prevailed upon in her situation? A better question still—Ought I?

Monday, May 14.

My cousin James has seen me, and I have chid him too for having been so hasty to carry bad news to Northamptonshire, without staying a day or two, when he might have carried better. 'Tis true they will not permit me to quit my chamber yet; but that is rather for precautionary than necessary reasons; and they have given over chiding me for writing. Their indulgence to me of my pen will convince you that I am quite well.

Lady Clementina most sincerely rejoices in my recovery; yet she is every day more and more thoughtful and solemn. She is grieved, she tells her mother (who is troubled at her

solemnity), for her brother Jeronymo, who indeed is not well. Mr. Lowther tells us that he must not expect to be exempt from temporary pains and disorder; but I am sure the worthy man would be easier in his own mind, were his sister to give her hand to the Count of Belvedere.

I talked to Sir Charles on this subject an hour ago. "Lady Clementina, my dear sir," said I, "is not happy. I question whether she ever will, unless she is allowed her own way—the veil."

"And that," returned he, "has been so long a family objection that the compliance with her wishes would break the heart of her mother at least, and greatly afflict all the rest. It must not, for their sakes, be thought of."

"What then, sir, can be done?"

"We must have patience, my dearest life. Her malady has unsettled her noble mind; she must try her own schemes; and if she find not happiness in any of them, she will think of new ones, till at last she fixes. Nor, I hope, is the time far off."

"Do you think so, sir?"

"Don't you see, my love, that the poor lady is more and more uneasy with herself? Something is working in her mind. I have desired her mother to leave that disturbed mind to its own generous workings. Her vehemence, raised by the opposition she met with, which she considered as a persecution, has for some time subsided; and she will probably fall upon reflections which she had not time to attend to before.

"Jeronymo thinks," proceeded he, "that I might successfully plead in the count's favour. But did I not draw the articles? Did I not propose the terms? Lady Clementina shall not be prevaricated with. She shuns me of late—in apprehension perhaps that I will try my influence over her. She never seems so easy as when she is with my dearest love. You must preserve that consequence with her which delicate

minds will ever be of to one another. Some little appearances of her malady will perhaps, now and then, show themselves and unsettle her; but I have no doubt, if it please God to preserve her reason, that her present uneasinesses will be productive of some great change in her schemes, which may end in a tranquillity of mind that will make all us who love her happy. Meantime, my dear, let this be our rule, if you please—let her lead; let us only follow. Persuasion against avowed inclination, you and I, my Harriet, have always condemned as a degree of compulsion. Had the admirable lady been entreated to take the noble measure she fell upon when she rejected me, however great the motives, she would not have been so happy as she was when she found herself absolute mistress of the question, and could astonish and surprise us all by her magnanimity."

Who could resist this reasoning? How well does he seem to know this excellent woman, when he considers her unhappy unfixedness, occasioned by a malady which will now and then (till she can be settled in some quiet and agreeable way) show itself in her conduct, when she has any great part before her to act!

Tuesday afternoon, May 15.

Lady Clementina, soon after dinner, sent up to me her Camilla (for I was not at table) to desire a quarter of an hour's discourse with me in my chamber. I gave direction that nobody should come to me till I rang. She entered, made me sit, took her seat by me, and immediately, with a noble frankness in her manner, thus began:—

"I could not, my dear Lady Grandison, ask the favour of your ear on the subject I wanted to open my heart upon to you, till I saw you were perfectly recovered. God be praised that you are! What anxieties did your late indisposition give me! I accused myself as the cause of it. I had engaged you thoughtlessly in too long a walk. You

know how Lady G., how Lady L. were terrified. I overheard them once that evening talking over their fears to one another. Lady G. looked with visible unkindness upon me. My aid ineffectual, my person in the way, I hurried to my chamber. 'Good God!' said I (every object looking strange about me), 'where am I? What am I? Can I be the same Clementina della Porretta that I was a few months ago? Can I have brought misery to the family which was my only refuge? To the man who——'" (she paused, then lifting up her eyes), "Blessed Virgin!" said she, "and is Clementina in the house of the man whom she has been known to regard above all men, and whom she still does regard, but not as Olivia supposes?—And then on my knees I offered up fervent prayers for your health and happiness, and that it would please God to return me, with reputation, to my native country. My eyes are now opened to the impropriety I have been guilty of in taking refuge in England and in remaining in it, and in your house, and with a man whom I am known to value. The world has begun to talk. Cruel Olivia! She will lead and point the talk, as she would have it believed. I am under obligation to your goodness, and to that of all your friends, that they and you think kindly of me, situated as I once was. I am obliged (mortifying consideration to a spirit like mine!) to Sir Charles Grandison's generosity and compassion, that he does not despise me. A girl (forgive me for mentioning it, it is to you only) has been, by my dear Mrs. Beaumont, proposed, indirectly at least, for a pattern to me. How am I sunk! My pride cannot bear it. Had I been allowed to take the veil, all these improprieties in my conduct had been prevented; all these mortifications would have been spared the unhappy Clementina. Tell me, advise me: May I not renew my entreaties to be allowed to take the veil? Give me, as to your sister (no sister ever loved her sister better than I love you), your advice; counsel me what to do, what course to steer, to recover myself in my own eyes. At present I hate, I despise myself."

"With how little reason, my dearest sister, my excellent friend. All my family revere you; Sir Charles, his sisters, and I love you; Lady G. particularly admires you: she could not possibly look unkindly upon you. What has Olivia dared to report? But did she ever forbear her rash censures? What can I advise you? I see your delicate distress. But suppose you open your mind to the marchioness?—to Mrs. Beaumont, suppose? She is the most prudent of women."

"I know their minds already. Their judgments are not with me. Mrs. Beaumont, indeed, without intending it, has terrified me. My mamma thinks herself bound by the articles, and will not speak."

"Suppose, my dearest lady, you advise with Sir Charles? You know he is the most delicate-minded of men."

"I shall ever honour him, but your indisposition has made me look upon him with more reverence than familiarity. I have avoided him. An exquisite pain has seized my heart on being brought to meditate the impropriety of my situation, a pain I cannot describe. Here it used to be," putting her hand to her forehead, "but here now it is," removing it to her heart, "and at times I cannot bear it."

"Let me beg of Lady Clementina to lay that noble heart open to Sir Charles. You know his disinterested affection for you. You know his regard for your glory. You know that your own mother, your own Mrs. Beaumont, are not more delicate than he is. You may unbosom yourself to him. But such is his fear of offending you that you must begin. A small opening will do. His nice regard for your honour, for the honour of our sex, will, on a slight encouragement, spare you all that would be irksome to you. He has no prejudices in favour or disfavour of anybody. He loves, it is true, he reveres your whole family, but you more than all the rest. Shall I say that he made his court to me in your name and by your interest, yet acknowledged himself refused by an angel?"

"Excellent man! I will consult him, and in your presence."

"As to my presence, madam——"

"It must be so," interrupted she: "I shall want your support. Do you be my advocate with him, and if he will be an advocate for me I may yet be happy. At present I see but one way to extricate myself with honour. I dare not propose it. He may. The world and Olivia will not let me be in that world a single woman and happy. Why should I not be allowed to quit it by a Divine dedication?"

I embraced her, soothed her, but thought of Sir Charles's advice not to lead but follow as she led; not one word, as I told her, would I say to him of what had passed between us, that she might have his own unprejudiced advice.

I rang by her permission. Sally came up. I made my request by her to her master. He found us together. "Sir Charles," said I, before he could speak, "Lady Clementina has something on her mind; I have besought her to consult you."

"I must consult you both," said she. "To-morrow morning, sir, as early as will suit Lady Grandison, we will meet for that purpose."

May the issue of to-morrow's conference be tranquillity of mind to this excellent lady!

LETTERS L.–LVII. *carry the affairs of Miss Selby, Miss Jervois, and Clementina somewhat farther.*

LETTER LVIII [vii]

LADY GRANDISON TO MRS. SHIRLEY

Monday, May 28.

THE marchioness having been desired to break to Lady Clementina the news of Laurana's death, as of a fever, she

did it with all imaginable tenderness this morning; but the generous lady was affected with it. "Oh, my poor cousin," said she, "once she loved me; I ever loved her. Had she time given her? On what a sandy foundation do we build our schemes of worldly glory! Poor Laurana! God, I hope, has taken her to the arms of His mercy."

The pious lady and her confessor have shut themselves up in the oratory appropriated for the devotions of this noble family, to pray, as I presume, for the soul of Laurana.

Everything is settled according to a plan laid down by Lady Clementina, at the request of all her family. The count and Signor Sebastiano are to set out for Dover on Thursday next. In less than a month from their departure the rest are to embark for France in their way home—all but Jeronymo. Sir Charles has prevailed that he shall be left behind to try what our English baths may contribute to the perfect re-establishment of his health.

This tender point having been referred to his admirable sister, she generously consented to his stay with us. She has still more generously, because unasked, released Sir Charles from his promise of attending them back to Italy, in consideration of his Harriet, since, at this time, he would not know how to leave her nor she to spare him. But the next summer, if it be permitted me to look so forward, or the succeeding autumn to that, we hope to be all happy at Bologna. Lady L., Lady G., and their lords have promised to accompany us; so has Dr. Bartlett; and we all hope that Sir Edward Beauchamp will not refuse to revisit Italy with his friends.

Friday, June 1.

Six happy days from the date of the letter which Lady Clementina wrote to her father and mother has the count passed with us—the happiest, he often declared, of his life; for in every one of them he was admitted with a freedom that

rejoiced his heart to converse with the mistress of his destiny. She called upon him more than once in that space of time to behave to her as a brother to his sister; for this, she thinks, the uncertainty of what her situation may be a twelvemonth hence requires for both their sakes.

Sweetly composed, sweetly easy was her whole behaviour to him, and to everybody else, during these six days. The sisterly character was well supported by her to him; but in the count, the most ardent, the most respectful, and even venerating lover took place of the brotherly one. Signor Jeronymo loves his sister as he loves himself; but the eyes of the count, compared with those of Jeronymo, demonstrated that there are two sorts of love, yet both ardent, and soul in both.

The parting scene between Clementina and the count was, on his side, a very fervent, on hers a kind one. On his knees he pressed with his lips her not withdrawn hand. He would have spoken, but only could by his eyes, which ran over. "Be happy, my Lord of Belvedere," said she. "You have my wishes for your health and safety. Adieu!"

She was retiring, but the count and Signor Sebastiano (of the latter of whom she had taken leave just before) following her a few paces, she turned, and with a noble composure, "Adieu, once more, my two friends," said she; "take care, my lord, of Signor Sebastiano; cousin, take care of the Count of Belvedere," courtesying to both. The count bowed to the ground speechless. As she passed me, "Lady Grandison," said she, raising my hand to her lips, "sister of my heart, the day is fine. Shall I, after you have blessed with your good wishes our parting friends, invite you into the garden?" I took a cordial leave of the two noble youths, and followed her thither.

We had a sweet conversation there; and it was made still more delightful to us both, by Sir Charles's joining us in about half-an-hour; for the two lords would not permit him to attend them one step beyond the courtyard, though he had

The parting scene between Clementina and the count was, on his side, a very fervent, on hers a kind one.

his horses in readiness to accompany them some miles on their way.

When we saw Sir Charles enter the garden, we stood still, arm in arm, expecting and inviting his approach. "Sweet sisters! lovely friends!" said he, when come up to us, taking a hand of each, and joining them, bowing on both. "Let me mark this blessed spot with my eye," looking round him, then on me. "A tear on my Harriet's cheek?" He dried it off with my own handkerchief. "Friendship, dearest creatures, will make at pleasure a safe bridge over the narrow seas; it will cut an easy passage through rocks and mountains, and make England and Italy one country. Kindred souls are always near."

"In that hope, my good chevalier; in that hope, my dear Lady Grandison, will Clementina be happy, though the day of separation must not be far distant. And will you here renew your promise that when it shall be convenient to you, my dear Lady Grandison, you will not fail to grace our Italy with your presence?"

"We do! We do!"

"Promise me again," said the noble lady. "I, too, have marked the spot with my eye" (standing still, and as Sir Charles had done, looking round her). "The orangery on the right hand; that distant clump of oaklings on the left; the villa, the rivulet, before us; the cascade in view; that obelisk behind us. Be this the spot to be recollected as witness to the promise, when we are far, far distant from each other."

We both repeated the promise; and Sir Charles said (and he is drawing a plan accordingly) that a little temple should be erected on that very spot, to be consecrated to our triple friendship, and since she had so happily marked it, to be called after her name.

On Monday next we are to set out for London. One fortnight passed, we shall accompany our noble friends to Dover. And there—oh! my grandmamma, how shall we do to part?

It is agreed that Mr. Lowther and Mr. Deane, though

When we saw Sir Charles enter the garden, we stood still, arm in arm, expecting and inviting his approach.

the latter, I bless God! is in good health, will next season

accompany Signor Jeronymo to Bath. Sir Charles proposes to be his visitor there; and when I will give permission, is the compliment made me, Sir Charles proposes to show him Ireland, and his improvements on his estate in that kingdom. Will not Lucy be rejoiced at that? I am happy that her lord and she take so kindly the felicitations I made them both. You, my dear grandmamma, and all my friends in Northamptonshire, are sure of the heart of

Their and your

HARRIET GRANDISON.

In LIX. *and* LX. *Lady Grandison thanks Providence for her happiness, the Porrettas depart, and news arrives that Sir Hargrave is dying.*

LETTER LXI [vii]

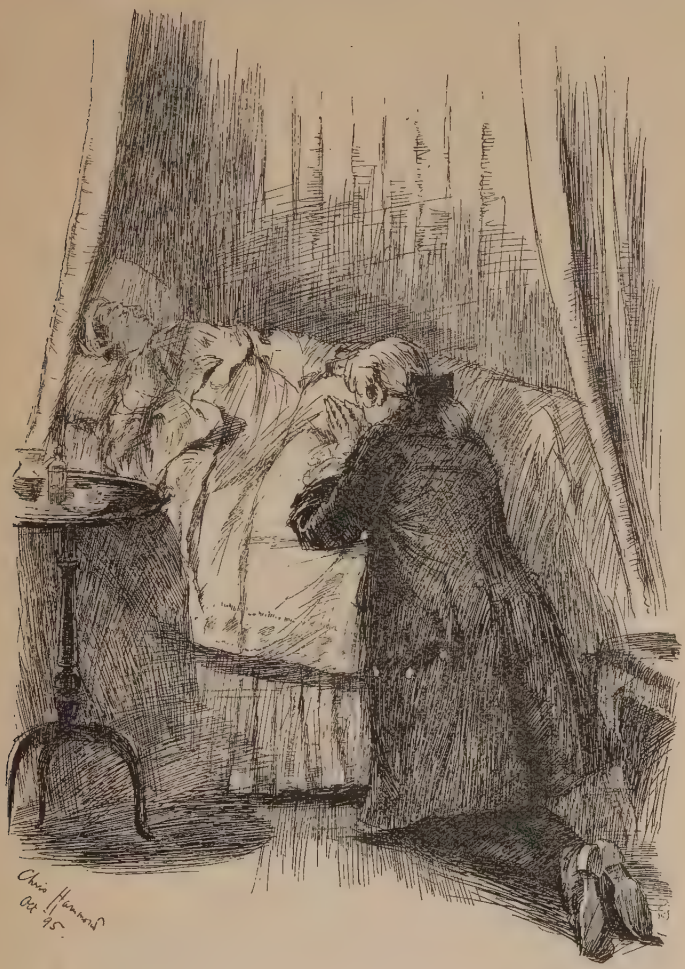
LADY GRANDISON TO MRS. SHIRLEY

Wednesday, June 27.

AH, my grandmamma! The poor Sir Hargrave!

Sir Charles returned but this morning. He found him sensible; he rejoiced to see him; he instantly begged his prayers. He wrung his hands, wept, lamented his past free life. "Fain," said he, "would I have been trusted with a few years' trial of my penitence. I have wearied Heaven with my prayers to this purpose. I deserved not, perhaps, that they should be heard. My conscience cruelly told me that I had neglected a multitude of opportunities—slighted a multitude of warnings. Oh, Sir Charles Grandison, it is a hard, hard thing to die!—in the prime of youth too!—such noble possessions!"

And then he warned his surrounding friends, and made



He endeavoured to administer comfort to him.

comparisons between Sir Charles's happiness and his own

misery. Sir Charles, at his request, sat up with him all night; he endeavoured to administer comfort to him, and called out for mercy for him when the poor man could only, by expressive looks, join in the solemn invocation. Sir Hargrave had begged he would close his eyes. He did. He stayed to the last painful moment. Judge what such a heart as Sir Charles's must have felt on the awful occasion!

Poor Sir Hargrave Pollexfen! May he have met with mercy from the All-merciful!

He gave his will into Sir Charles's hands soon after he came down. He has made him his sole executor. Have you not been told that Sir Charles had heretofore reconciled him to his relations and heirs-at-law? He had the pleasure of finding the reconciliation sincere. The poor man spoke kindly to them all. They were tenderly careful of him. He acknowledged their care.

I cannot write for tears. The poor man, in the last solemn act of his life, has been intendedly kind, but really cruel, to me. I should have been a sincere mourner for him (a life so misspent) without this act of regard for me. He has left me, as a small atonement, he calls it, for the terrors he once gave me, a very large legacy in money (Sir Charles has not yet told me what), and his jewels and plate; and he has left Sir Charles a noble one besides. He died immensely rich. Sir Charles is grieved at both legacies, and the more as he cannot give them back to the heirs, for they declare that he bound them under a solemn oath (and by a curse if they broke it) not to accept back, either from Sir Charles or me, the large bequests he told them he had made us, and they assured Sir Charles that they would be religiously bound by it.

Many unhappy objects will be the better for these bequests. Sir Charles tells me that he will not interfere—no, not so much as by his advice—in the disposal of mine. You, madam, and my aunt Selby must direct me when it comes into my hands. Sir Charles intends that the poor man's

He is pleased with his Harriet for the concern she expressed for this unhappy man.

memory shall receive true honour from the disposition of his legacy to him. He is pleased with his Harriet for the concern she expressed for this unhappy man. The most indulgent of husbands finds out some reason to praise her for everything she says and does. But could he be otherwise than the best of husbands who was the most dutiful of sons, who is the most affectionate of brothers, the most faithful of friends, who is good upon principle in every relation of life?

What, my dear grandmamma, is the boasted character of most of those who are called heroes to the unostentatious merit of a truly good man? In what a variety of amiable lights does such a one appear! In how many ways is he a blessing and a joy to his fellow-creatures!

And this blessing, this joy, your Harriet can call more peculiarly her own!

My single heart, methinks, is not big enough to contain the gratitude which such a lot demands. Let the overflowings of your pious joy, my dearest grandmamma, join with my thankfulness in paying part of the immense debt for

Your undeservedly happy

HARRIET GRANDISON.

A CONCLUDING NOTE BY THE EDITOR

The Editor of the foregoing collection has the more readily undertaken to publish it, because he thinks human nature has often, of late, been shown in a light too degrading; and he hopes from this series of letters it will be seen that characters may be good without being unnatural. Sir Charles Grandison himself is sensible of imperfections, and, as the reader will remember, accuses himself more than once of tendencies to pride and passion, which it required his utmost caution and vigilance to rein in; and many there are who look upon his offered compromise with the Porretta family, in allowing the daughters of the proposed marriage to be brought up by the mother, reserving to himself the education of the sons only, as a blot in the character. Indeed, Sir Charles himself declares to the general that he would not have come into such a compromise in a beginning address, not even with a princess.

Notwithstanding this, it has been observed by some that, in general, he approaches too near the faultless character which critics censure as above nature; yet it ought to be observed, too, that he performs no one action which it is not in the power of any man in his situation to perform; and that he checks and restrains himself in no one instance in which it is not the duty of a prudent and good man to restrain himself.

It has been objected by some persons that a man less

able by strength or skill to repel an affront than Sir Charles appears to have been, could not with such honour have extricated himself out of difficulties on refusing a challenge. And this is true, meaning by honour the favourable opinion of the European world, from the time of its being overrun by Gothic barbarism down to the present. But as that notion of honour is evidently an absurd and mischievous one, and yet multitudes are at a loss to get over it, the rejection and confutation of it by a person whom, it was visible, the consideration of his own safety did not influence, must surely be of no small weight. And when it is once allowed that there are cases and circumstances in which these polite invitations to murder may, consistently with honour, be disregarded, a little attention will easily find others. Vulgar notions will insensibly wear out, and more ground be gained by degrees than could have been attempted with hope of success at once, till at length all may come to stand on the firm footing of reason and religion.

In the meantime, they who are less qualified to carry off right behaviour with honour in the eye of common judges, will, however, be esteemed for it by every serious and prudent person, and perhaps inwardly by many who are mean enough to join outwardly in blaming them.

Indeed, when a person hath deserved harsh treatment, his acquiescence under it may generally be imputed to fear alone, and so render him an object at once of hatred and ridicule hardly possible to be borne; but he who supports a conduct equally offensive by ever so much brutal courage, though a less contemptible, is a vastly more detestable creature; whilst an upright and harmless man, suppose him ever so timorous, merits rather a kind sort of pity than violent scorn.

But, whoever declines forbidden instances of self-vindication, not from fear but from principle, which is always to be presumed if his regard to principle be steady and uniform in other things, such a one, however inferior to Sir Charles

Grandison in advantages of nature and art, yet, if he shows real greatness of mind in such things as all men may, needs no doubt but he shall be respected by most, and may be sufficiently easy though he is despised by some. He will still have the satisfaction of reflecting that the laws of all nations are on his side,[1] and only the usurped authority of a silly modern custom against him; that, on many occasions, worthy men in all ages have patiently suffered false disgrace for adhering to their duty; that the true bravery is to adhere to all duties under all disadvantages, and that refusing a duel is a duty to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and our Maker. And whoever acts on these principles, the more reproach he undergoes for it, rather than be driven, like a coward, by the scoffs of his fellow-subjects, to rebel against the Sovereign of the universe, will have the more delightful consciousness of a strong inward principle of piety and virtue, and the more distinguished reward from the final Judge of all, who alone disposes of that honour which shall never fade.

[1] It is so highly worth observing that even the military law of our own country is strongly against duelling, that the editor cannot help subjoining an extract out of the articles of war, and recommending it to the consideration of all military persons.

Article XX.

". . . Nor shall any officer or soldier presume to send a challenge to any other officer or soldier to fight a duel, upon pain of being cashiered if he be an officer, or suffering the severest corporal punishment if a non-commissioned officer, or private soldier; and if any officer or non-commissioned officer commanding a guard shall willingly and knowingly suffer any person whatever to go forth to fight a duel, they shall be punished as above; and all seconds also, and carriers of challenges, shall be taken as principals and punished accordingly. . . . Nor shall any officer or soldier upbraid another for refusing a challenge, since, according to these our orders, they but do the duty of soldiers, who ought to subject themselves to discipline; and we do acquit and discharge all men who have quarrels offered, or challenges sent to them, of all disgrace or opinion of disadvantage, in their obedience hereunto; and whosoever shall upbraid them and offend in this case shall be punished as a challenger."

It has been said in behalf of many modern fictitious pieces, in which authors have given success (and happiness, as it is called) to their heroes, of vicious, if not of profligate characters, that they have exhibited human nature as it is. Its corruption may, indeed, be exhibited in the faulty character; but need pictures of this be held out in books? Is not vice crowned with success, triumphant, and rewarded, and perhaps set off with wit and spirit, a dangerous representation? And is it not made even more dangerous by the hasty reformation, introduced, in contradiction to all probability, for the sake of patching up what is called a happy ending?

The God of nature intended not human nature for a vile and contemptible thing; and many are the instances, in every age, of those whom He enables, amidst all the frailties of mortality, to do it honour. Still the best performances of human creatures will be imperfect; but such as they are, it is surely both delightful and instructive to dwell sometimes on this bright side of things; to show, by a series of facts in common life, what a degree of excellence may be attained and preserved amidst all the infection of fashionable vice and folly.

Sir Charles Grandison is therefore, in the general tenor of his principles and conduct (though exerted in peculiarities of circumstances that cannot always be accommodated to particular imitation), proposed for an example; and, in offering him as such, were his character still more perfect than it is presumed to be, the editor is supported by an eminent divine of our own country.

"There is no manner of inconvenience in having a pattern propounded to us of so great perfection as is above our reach to attain to, and there may be great advantages in it. The way to excel in any kind is *optima quæque exempla ad imitandum proponere*—to propose the brightest and most perfect examples to our imitation. No man can write after too

perfect and good a copy; and though he can never reach the perfection of it, yet he is like to learn more than by one less perfect. He that aims at the heavens, which yet he is sure to come short of, is like to shoot higher than he that aims at a mark within his reach.

"Besides that the excellency of the pattern, as it leaves room for continual improvement, so it kindles ambition and makes men strain and contend to the utmost to do better. And though he can never hope to equal the example before him, yet he will endeavour to come as near it as he can; so that a perfect pattern is no hinderance, but an advantage rather to our improvement in any kind." (Tillotson, vol. ii. Serm. lvii. p. 577.)

THE END

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